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U.S., Japanese veterans unite in memory of 27,000 fallen

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A ceremonial platoon of Marines and the joint U.S.-Japan color guard stand before the Reunion of Honor monument Saturday on a hill overlooking Yellow Beach on Iwo Jima during the battle's 60th anniversary commemoration.

FRED ZIMMERMAN
Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Prison guard hostage trial: An inmate charged with taking an Arizona prison guard hostage for 15 days plans to defend himself in his trial beginning Monday—and says he will have the woman he is accused of raping “in shreds” when the questions her on the stand.

Jury selection begins this week for Ricky Wassenaar's trial in the longest U.S. prison hostage situation in decades. Acting as his own attorney will allow Wassenaar, 41, to directly question the woman he allegedly took hostage and raped.

Boeing CEO's dismissal: The wife of ousted Boeing CEO Harry Stonecipher has filed for divorce, less than a week after the aerospace company's board forced him out for improper conduct related to an affair with a female executive.

Joan Stonecipher, 68, cited “irreconcilable differences” in papers filed Friday in Cook County, Ill., Circuit Court. The filing comes just a month after the couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. She listed her occupation as housewife and demanded a “fair and reasonable sum” from her husband, who she described as having “substantial income and wealth.”

Business

Tyco cleanup: For Edward Breen, the head of scandal-plagued Tyco International, turning the Concord, N.H., company around required some serious house-cleaning.

“Out of 450 people in our corporate office, 442 are new since I got there,” said Breen, who took over in 2002.

He even persuaded the board of directors—the very people who had hired him—to resign.

Two and a half years after taking the helm of a company besieged by scandal and debt, Breen, 48, has bragging rights that include a 33 percent increase in earnings.

War on terrorism

Turkish detainee: The U.S. lawyer for a Turkish man who has been held at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba said Sunday that Turkish officials have told his client's family he would be freed.

Attorney Baber Azmy said that Turkish military officials called the mother of Murat Kurnaz on Saturday and informed her that her son was being flown to a U.S. military base in Turkey.

The news comes days after Azmy told re-



Funeral for Chicago judge's mother: Susan Lawrence, right, a friend of U.S. District Judge Joan Lewkow's family, grieves outside Saturday's memorial service for Donna Humphrey, Lewkow's mother, in Littleton, Colo. Humphrey was found shot dead along with Lewkow's husband, Michael, Feb. 28 in the basement of Lewkow's Chicago home.

porters in Germany, where Kurnaz was born, that his client said he had been abused while in Guantanamo.

World

Departing Hong Kong leader: China's state media showered praise Sunday on newly departed Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa, suggesting that his new post on an elite government advisory body will help the territory.

“Mr. Tung, you did your best!” said a headline in the Yangcheng Evening News, a newspaper in the southern province of Guangdong, which borders Hong Kong.

Chinese leaders approved Tung's resignation Saturday. They appointed Hong Kong's top civil servant, Donald Tsang, to serve as the former British colony's acting chief executive until a permanent replacement is picked in July.

Taiwan independence struggle: China planned to enact a law Monday authorizing an attack on rival Taiwan if it moves toward formal independence, defying U.S. appeals for restraint and a demand by the island's people to withdraw the measure.

A vote on the anti-secession law by Chi-

na's ceremonial legislature is scheduled for the last day of its annual session. Passage is certain, because the body approves all legislation already decided by the ruling Communist Party.

West Bank settlements: Israel's Cabinet affirmed Sunday that it will dismantle 24 illegal West Bank settlement outposts, but did not give a deadline, and evaded decision on the fate of 81 more outposts, participants said.

During their weekly meeting, ministers were briefed on an official report that said successive governments helped build and expand 105 outposts over the past decade. The Cabinet adopted the report, including recommendations that new laws be passed to make it easier to dismantle outposts in the future.

Pakistan rape victim: A journalist in eastern Pakistan said Sunday that he will propose marriage to a rape victim who attracted international media attention after she went public with her ordeal.

Rana Mohammed Arshad, 30, who works for a Lahore-based Urdu-language newspaper, said that in keeping with local traditions he, his mother and one of his brothers will travel to Mukhtar Mai's village to propose to her.

Mai drew international attention when she spoke about her rape in 2002 by several men in Meerwala, Pakistan. She was ordered raped by a council of village elders after her brother was accused of having sex with another woman.

Afghanistan plane crash: Afghan authorities have completed their search for the bodies of more than 100 people who died last month when an airliner slammed into a mountain during a snowstorm, an official said Sunday.

Defense Ministry spokesman Mohammed Zahir Azimi also said the final death toll from the Feb. 3 crash could also rise to 106—two more than originally announced—because one or two small children were also featured among the passengers.

Nepal attacks: Nepal's communist insurgents on Sunday threatened to step up attacks on government security forces and said they would stage road blockades and strikes across Nepal.

The elusive rebel leader Prachanda said the rebels would also follow up the regional blockades and protests with a 10-day nationwide strike beginning April 1.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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Iwo Jima anniversary brings former foes together in peace

U.S. and Japanese veterans of WWII's bloodiest battle pay tribute to the more than 27,000 who died there 60 years ago

BY FRED ZIMMERMAN
Stars and Stripes

MIWO JIMA, Japan, once determined to kill one another met again this week-end, but this time in peace at a ceremony to pay tribute to warriors who never left this desolate island.

More than 60 U.S. veterans of the Battle of Iwo Jima and a handful of their Japanese counterparts met at the Reunion of Honor monument on a hill overlooking Yellow Beach, where many U.S. Marines landed on Feb. 19, 1945.

— the first time during the war that U.S. ground forces set foot on Japanese soil.

This year was the 60th anniversary of one of World War II's bloodiest battles. More than 100,000 U.S. troops fought to take the island, suffering more than 26,000 casualties including more than 6,800 deaths. Fewer than 1,000 of the 22,000 Japanese defenders survived.

Iwo Jima was strategically important to the U.S. bombing campaign against Japan. Once taken, fight-

er planes could be based there to escort bombers on missions; bombers returning crippled could land there, possibly saving their crews from crashing or ditching at sea. By the war's end, 2,251 B-29s with 24,761 crewmen made emergency landings on the island.

During the ceremony, retired Lt. Gen. Larry Snowden, who fought on Iwo Jima, said the Japanese defenders fought to protect their homeland while the Marines fought to bring the end of the war and go home.

Snowden added that "hated was the motivating force 60 years ago, but peace should breed friendship — and that's what happened in the years since."

Gen. Michael Hagee, Marine Corps commandant, said during the ceremony, "Our first duty is to remember."

In World War II's four years, Hagee said, 353 Medals of Honor were awarded — 27 of them from actions during the 36 days of fighting on Iwo Jima. He recalled Adm. Chester Nimitz's words in praising those who fought that



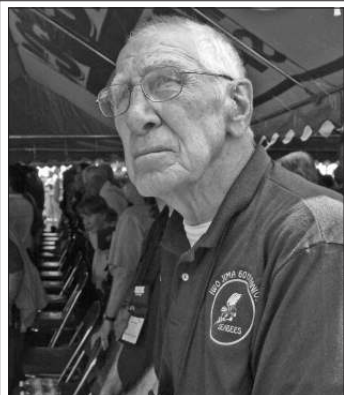
Stars and Stripes

battle, saying, "Uncommon valor was indeed a common virtue."

Kiyoshi Endo, the chairman of the Japanese Iwo Jima Veteran's Association, also spoke about remembering the past. Endo served as North Iwo Jima Division commandant until the end of the battle.

"Truly, memories of the tragic Battle of Iwo Jima have faded away through generations," Endo said. "Our responsibilities and duties are to dedicate the rest of our lives to passing our memories on to our next generations so that a tragic battle of this kind would never be repeated."

SEE IWO JIMA ON PAGE 4



PHOTOS BY FRED ZIMMERMAN/Stars and Stripes

Elmer Rome stands in silence as taps is played Saturday at the 60th anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Iwo Jima on the island. As a Navy Seabee with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion, Rome landed in the second wave on Iwo Jima. He called the black sand beach home for 17 days.

Seabee shares island memories with family

IWO JIMA, Japan — On Saturday, Elmer Rome stood again on the black sand beach of Iwo Jima that he called home for 17 days in 1945.

Sixty years ago, he first set foot on the island as a young petty officer third class with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion. The unit, attached to the 4th Marine Division, was in the second wave of troops to land on the island — just eight minutes after the first wave. Rome said they had to jump over the landing crafts' sides and wade to shore, but he doesn't remember the water being too deep.

"We were 1,014 guys who had no idea of what we were getting into," he said.

Once they landed, the carpenter's mate, undergoing his first combat experience, quickly saw the ugly face of war. "I saw all the ones that were killed or maimed lying there on the beach," Rome said. "I was never scared and never hurt ... I never paid much attention to what was going on around me. I was too focused on my job."

The U.S. forces were taking so many casualties that every time he and his fellow Seabees ran supplies to the front, they returned carrying stretchers bearing the wounded. He said a photo of him carrying a stretcher was on a 1945 Look magazine cover.

After living on the beach for 17 days, Rome said, the Seabees moved almost directly across the island, where they built water tanks at a desalination site. He also helped build some barracks near the site.

And "a guy by the name of Bernard ... he built the cemetery," Rome said so many died that Bernard became so effi-

cient he could dig the graves to precisely the right size.

Rome had returned to Iwo Jima just once, in 1995, when he brought a daughter to the commemoration. This year, he brought all 10 of his children.

"I promised them I would," he said. "We started planning last November."

Rome's children said that growing up, they knew little of what their father did on Iwo Jima.

"He just wouldn't talk about it," said daughter Mary-Anne Osborne. "Until he came back for the 50th anniversary. Then he would talk about it occasionally."

"I just thought it was natural that he wouldn't talk about it," said daughter Jayne Schultz.

Son T.J. said he'd learned things from his father this past week that he'd never heard before — such as how he went to the cemetery to visit the graves of seven friends who had died.

While their father still may be holding in some of his memories, T.J. said, the family was able to get their hands on some of his history. They found and purchased two copies of the Look magazine issue with him on the cover.

"I think they paid about \$10," said the elder Rome.

T.J. replied, "It was a lot more than \$10, dad. But you don't need to worry about how much it was."

Iwo Jima's hills are lush today, not at all like when Rome was a young Seabee running stretchers on the battle-blasted island. But, he said, "there are some pictures that show the beach exactly as I remember it."

— Fred Zimmerman

Members of the Japanese delegation pour water over the Reunion of Honor monument Saturday during the 60th anniversary marking of the battle of Iwo Jima. The annual ceremony pays tribute to the more than 27,000 troops who lost their lives there.



Son traces father's footsteps, returns piece of WWII history

BY FRED ZIMMERMAN
Stars and Stripes

TWO JIMA, Japan — Most veterans returned to this Pacific island this weekend to pay tribute to the dead and remember their place in history. But one man had two other missions: learning more about his father and righting a wrong.

Cliff Hadley's father, Cliff Hadley Sr., was a 19-year-old Marine private first class when he hit the Iwo Jima beaches with the 4th Marine Division. The young Marine was a radian that was "a good shot," his son said.

After taking part in battling for Hill 382 and fighting at the "meat grinder, turkey knob and amphitheater," Hadley said, his father's unit began clearing caves — and Hadley's father snagged a war trophy that remained a family mystery for almost 60 years.

"I heard rumors that he had it but I never believe it existed," the son said. "He never showed it to us."

When Hadley told his mother he was heading to Iwo Jima for the battle's 60th anniversary, she asked if he would return the item. Hadley's father died two years ago at age 77. His mother said they didn't need it anymore, that it didn't belong to the family.

The tag on the Japanese Navy uniform jacket that Cliff Hadley returned Saturday to the Japanese on Iwo Jima.

After all the years, Hadley finally learned the rumor was true and got a glimpse of the war trophy. His mother went to her bedroom and pulled out a plastic bag. Inside was a Japanese navy sailor's uniform jacket. "On one job he went into a cave and on the way out, he saw the jacket and snatched it up," said Hadley, who added that his father didn't remove the article from a body; it was simply lying on the ground.

The item wasn't worn, washed or removed from the drawer for 60 years, Hadley said; it remained in exactly the shape it was in when it left the cave. Hadley said he was told it was preserved that way because some type of identification tag was stitched into the collar.

Translated, the tag shows the uniform was made in December 1942 and issued in October 1943 to Sannosuke Akitaya. The sailor apparently was from



Cliff Hadley holds the Japanese sailor's coat his father, Cliff Hadley Sr., took out of a cave during fighting on the island in 1945. The uniform sat in a drawer in his father's house for the last 60 years. The son never knew for sure that it existed until he told his mother he was coming to the 60th anniversary commemoration and she asked him to return the jacket to the Japanese. He did.

the Maizuru military supply department in Kyoto Prefecture.

After Saturday's commemoration ceremony, Hadley gave the uniform jacket to Japanese official T. Ross Ogawa. He said returning the uniform felt good. "It's a relief... Even though he (his father) didn't desecrate anyone when he took it as a 19-year-old, I think he'd say now, 'I took something that wasn't mine.'"

After taking care of one his reasons for coming to Iwo Jima, the son then set out to see where his father fought. He said he had about a two-mile hike down the beach to the spot where he thinks his dad landed 60 years ago.

Said Hadley: "I'm going to see how many of my dad's footsteps I can follow."

Chiyoami Sumida contributed to this report.
E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: zimmermanf@strips.com



PHOTOS BY FRED ZIMMERMAN/Stars and Stripes

A joint Japan-U.S. color guard presents the nations' flags during the battle of Iwo Jima 60th anniversary commemoration on the island Saturday. Every year on March 12, U.S. and Japanese veterans, their families and officials meet on the island to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the bloody battle.

Iwo Jima: Many spoke to celebrate friendships

IWO JIMA, FROM PAGE 3

While all spoke of the tragedy of the battle, many also talked about the friendship that has been built since. Hagee said grandchildren of men who fought on the island as foes now stand together as allies in Iraq and elsewhere throughout the world.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori said the two countries are working together for world peace and security. "I believe that our cooperation is a great tribute to the spirits of Japanese and American soldiers who died on this island," said Mori, who said he learned much about peace by witnessing the veterans

gather in friendship.

After the speeches, U.S. and Japanese officials placed wreaths at the foot of the monument. Japanese officials made the symbolic offering to the fallen of pouring water over the marker. Rifles cracked in a 21-gun salute. The assembly then observed a 30-second moment of silence; the only sounds were the wind blowing the grass and distant waves pounding the black beach.

As have so many other such gatherings on the desolate Pacific island, the ceremony ended with the echoing of taps.

E-mail Fred Zimmerman at: zimmermanf@strips.com

Yokota contracting squadron tops in Air Force

BY T.D. FLACK
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Lt. Col. Wayne Patterson said learning his 374th Contracting Squadron won the 2004 Air Force Outstanding Contracting Unit award was his "military moment." "It was a huge, huge thrill," Patterson said. "I'm still losing sleep, I'm so happy."

The squadron supports operational, specialized and research and development contracting to the 374th Airfield Wing, 5th Air Force, U.S. Forces Japan, the

Asian Office of Aerospace Research and Development and four other agencies, from the Marine Corps' III Marine Expeditionary Force to the Army's 9th Theater Support Command, according to a squadron fact sheet.

The squadron enjoyed two major success stories in 2004, Patterson said: Earning an "outstanding" rating during the Pacific Air Forces Inspector General's Unit Compliance Inspection and having its Government Purchase Card Team win the Department of Defense David Packard Excellence in Acquisition Award — the first time a wing-level organization has taken the title in the award's eight-year history.

Contracting was one of just two Yokota squadrons to earn the "outstanding" rating in the week-long UCI inspection held every

four years, said Dona Alexander, director of squadron business operations and deputy commander.

"The 374th Contracting Squadron was virtually flawless," stated a fact sheet on its UCI performance. The Government Purchase Card program was called a "best practice" — no deficiencies were found in more than 900 contracts. The Quality Assurance Program was called "best seen to date," with 100 percent compliance in its initiatives. The Contract Review Programs, labeled "best seen to date," were praised for providing "invaluable training for squadron personnel."

Yokota's five-person GPC team runs the Pacific's largest program, with 923 cardholders. Patterson said the team began a "paperless" spreadsheet and e-mail system that reduced

final-report turnaround time by three weeks. The team also achieved a 93.3 percent GPC usage rate, above the Air Force goal of 90 percent, and reduced a \$1 million backlog of 217 purchase orders to "practically zero."

Patterson said the success is even more noteworthy because military members' deployments tripled during the year. Even Patterson deployed for three months in the global war on terrorism. He credits the civilian contractors — including Alexander — for leading the unit during the fiscal year close-out.

"The Japanese... are the majority in the squadron and provide the continuity and stability we need to support our customers," Patterson wrote Stripes. "Customer service did not suffer" during deployments "because the Japanese

nationals graciously stepped up and accomplished the mission."

Patterson said his staff focuses on two things: the "brilliant at the basics" training program and customer support.

He said his squadron's final 2004 award had nothing to do with work performance. The unit's work with the Keimeigakuen Orphanage in Ome earned it a Zenkoku Good Deeds Award from the "Good Conduct Association of Japan." Each year, the nonprofit group, controlled by the Japanese prime minister's office, awards people and organizations that have done good deeds for the community.

"I am equally proud of the volunteerism and community involvement of the squadron members," Patterson wrote.

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Two U.S. contractors killed in Iraq bombing

GI gunned down in Mosul attack; Kurds, Shiites near completion on power-sharing deal

By TODD PITMAN
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Two American security contractors were killed and a third wounded by a roadside bomb south of the Iraqi capital on Sunday, while Kurdish leaders said they were nearing completion on a deal with the dominant Shiite-led alliance on forming a coalition government at this week's National Assembly.

The three contractors were working for Blackwater Security, a North Carolina-based contracting firm that provides security for U.S. State Department officials in Iraq. They were attacked Saturday on the main road to Hillah, south of Baghdad, U.S. Embassy spokesman Bob Callahan said.

A U.S. soldier also was gunned down late Saturday in a small-arms fire attack in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, the U.S. command said Sunday.

Foreign contractors are often targeted by anti-U.S. guerrillas. At least 232 American civilian security and reconstruction contractors were killed in Iraq up to the end of 2004, according to the Washington-based Brookings Institution.

The State Department said it was "deeply saddened" by the deaths of the two contractors and the wounding of another.

"These men were assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Iraq to protect American diplomats. They played a vital role in our mission to bring democracy, and opportunity to the people of Iraq," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a statement.

The Blackwater employees were in the last vehicle in a four-vehicle convoy and were traveling to Hillah from Baghdad, Callahan said. A foreign security official



Iraqi tribal leaders attend a conference on regional federalism Sunday in Baghdad. In political developments, the country's main Shiite and Kurdish coalitions were putting the finishing touches on an agreement they hoped to sign on Monday forming a coalition government, in advance of the National Assembly convening on Wednesday.

said they were in a black Chevrolet Suburban. The road south traverses an area known as the "Triangle of Death" because of the frequency of insurgent attacks.

Blackwater said the contractors, who were not identified, were attacked on a highway just southeast of Baghdad's airport. The company said the wounded employee's injuries were not life-threatening.

In March 2004, four Blackwater employees were killed in the turbulent city of Fallujah, and two of the corpses were hung

from a bridge, triggering a bloody three-week siege of the restive Sunni Muslim city west of Baghdad soon afterward.

Two Iraqis also were killed and five wounded Sunday when a roadside bomb missed a U.S. convoy in al-Obaidi in south-eastern Baghdad, said Dr. Ali Karim of Kindi hospital, where the casualties were taken.

In the north, Kurdish leaders said they would go ahead with a deal they made with the Shiite-dominated United Iraqi Alliance

last week to help form a coalition government when the 275-member National Assembly convenes on Wednesday.

The Kurds won 75 seats in the Assembly during Jan. 30 elections.

The alliance won 140 seats and needs Kurdish support to assemble the two-thirds majority to elect a president, who will then give a mandate to the prime minister.

"Talks between us did not fail. Both delegations went back to review the negotiations," said Foad Masoum, a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.

Interim Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh, a Kurd, said the two sides were very close to reaching a comprehensive agreement, including the makeup of the coalition government, and he denied reports that their power-sharing deal had collapsed.

"The Kurdish side will fully cooperate to reach a comprehensive agreement that will guarantee a national unity government for Iraq up to handling the upcoming challenges," Saleh said.

"There are some details that have to be determined soon and there are some loose ends regarding some details, but at the same time, there are many principles that were agreed upon," he added.

Interim Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, a Kurd, said a Kurdish delegation was to meet with the alliance.

"We are going to Baghdad to continue discussion, we are very close to a final agreement. The meeting of the assembly on the 16th will take place as planned and there's no changes," he said.

Report: U.S. told of Italian's rescue

The Associated Press

ROME — American officials in Iraq were told that an Italian intelligence officer was there to free a hostage — but only at the very last minute, shortly before U.S. troops opened fire on their vehicle, killing the officer and wounding the woman, Italian media reported Sunday.

Several Italian dailies cited a report now in the hands of Rome prosecutors by Maj. Gen. Mario Marioli, an Italian who is the coalition forces' second-in-command. In it, Marioli said U.S. authorities were aware that the agent, Nicola Calipari, and another officer were in Iraq, but only he knew

why. He said Calipari had told him not to tell the Americans they were there to collect a hostage.

Italian media have speculated that the reason for not telling the Americans was due to U.S. opposition to Italy's policy of negotiating with kidnappers.

However, Marioli also said he finally told an American officer with him at the Baghdad airport — a certain "Capt. Green" — after getting a call that the mission had been a success and that the two agents and freed journalist Giuliana Sgrena were on their way back, according to dailies Corriere della Sera, Il Messaggero and La Stampa.

Calipari was killed March 4 when U.S. troops fired on the vehicle carrying him and the other two Italians at a checkpoint.

It is not clear how much time went by between the time when Marioli told the Americans about the mission and the shooting, or whether the tragedy could have been avoided if U.S. authorities had been better informed.

After the shooting, the U.S. military said that the vehicle carrying the Italians was speeding and refused to stop, and that a U.S. patrol tried to warn the driver with hand and arm signals, by flashing white lights and firing shots in front of the car and into the car's engine block.

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Families back GIs' actions in death of agent

Newsday

WASHINGTON — Families of a New York Army National Guard unit are defending the actions in the checkpoint shooting of an Italian journalist and intelligence officer, with one nervous father saying his son told him "anybody in that unit would have done the same thing."

"Nobody takes any chances," said William Bambino of Wantagh, N.Y., who spoke to his son, Pfc. Phillip Bambino, two days after the March 4 checkpoint shooting, though his son wasn't involved. "If anybody doesn't heed a warning, they don't give you a second chance. A second chance is too late."

Pfc. Bambino is part of Manhattan's 69th Infantry Regiment of the 42nd Infantry Division, which was on duty when a car carrying a freed Italian journalist and her rescuer came upon a U.S. military checkpoint on Baghdad's notorious airport road.

As word of the shooting has filtered home in media reports, some families of the "Fighting 69th" say the troops are nervous. Some worry that a witch-hunt mentality could arise in the probe due to Italian calls for answers, even as the troops tell of the intense pressures and split-second decision-making needed to guard a route targeted by insurgents.

Rights group: Abuses by U.S. date back to '02

BY VERENA DOBNIK
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Unreleased U.S. Army reports detailing the beating deaths of two Afghan men at the hands of American soldiers show that military prison abuses began in Afghanistan in 2002, and were part of a systematic pattern of mistreatment, a human rights representative said Saturday.

More than two dozen American soldiers face possible criminal prosecution — and

one already is charged with manslaughter — in the deaths at the main U.S. detention facility in Bagram, just north of the Afghan capital of Kabul.

As documented by the Army's Criminal Investigation Command, the men died a year before the photographed horrors at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, according to John Sifton, the Afghanistan researcher for the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

In a phone interview, Sifton said his group had obtained 20 pages of electronically scanned Army reports.

The American Civil Liberties Union sued to obtain the case files under the Freedom of Information Act, but the Army withheld portions of the records because of an ongoing investigation and possible charges.

On Saturday, a Pentagon spokesman, Lt. Col. Jeremy Martin, would say only that the cases from 2002 "were thoroughly investigated and people were punished appropriately."

"The Bush Administration and the Pentagon describe the abuse problems as isolated incidents, not systematic, not part of a plan.

he evidence shows otherwise," Sifton said. "Far from being isolated incidents, these beatings were part of a pattern of abuse."

Members of the 519th Military Intelligence Battalion who set up intelligence operations at the Bagram facility did the same at the Abu Ghraib prison.

The two Afghan detainees died in December 2002 — a week apart — as reported in Army memos, with updates detailing their fate after they were captured by Afghan forces and handed to the U.S. military.

U.S. ready to counter criticism of prison abuses in Middle East

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission opens on Monday in Geneva with the United States prepared to confront critics ready to highlight the rights abuses by U.S. military personnel of Iraqi, Afghan and other prisoners.

In previous years, the United States has been free to focus on the rights shortcomings of other countries at commission meetings.

But continuing disclosures about prisoner mistreatment dating back to last spring have required the administration to adopt a defensive strategy for the coming six-week convocation.

As part of a damage control plan, U.S. delegates have devised a pro-active approach for the meeting. They will point to American efforts to hold accountable those responsible for behavior that the administration acknowledges has been reprehensible, U.S. officials say.

The scandals have triggered a spate of investigations and some low-level personnel have been punished. But thus far, senior military officers and civilian Pentagon officials have escaped blame. The U.S. team in Geneva will be led by former Republican Sen. Rudy Boschwitz.

The 53-nation meeting is tak-

ing place against a background of deep U.S. frustration with the commission, principally the result of an absence of standards for admission to the body. More than a third of the countries on the commission are led by undemocratic governments and two — Cuba and Zimbabwe — were among six countries listed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as "outposts of tyranny."

Officials say the blame lies not with the United Nations but with particular U.N. members. Latin American countries selected Cuba to be on the commission, over U.S. objections. Zimbabwe was chosen by African coun-

tries.

"Only by reclaiming its role of exposing governments that systematically abuse human rights, and establishing measures to redress those violations, can the commission re-establish its relevance," the New York-based Human Rights Watch said in a statement.

Earlier this year, Cuba and Zimbabwe served on a five-nation working group assigned to set part of the agenda for this year's meeting.

Cuba tried to get fellow working group members to get the U.S. prisoner abuse scandal on the agenda but the effort fell short by a 3-1 vote, with Zimbabwe abstaining. This, however, will not prevent that issue from being aired during the commission's deliberations.

tants in southern and eastern Afghanistan, where Taliban-led rebels have maintained a stubborn insurgency since 2001.

From The Associated Press

Slain CIA agent's father hunts for answers about son's death

BY JEFFREY MCMURRAY
The Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Va. — Johnny Spann stood in a gale falling snow and wistfully recalled the day his son, CIA officer Johnny Michael "Mike" Spann, lingered among the tombstones at Arlington National Cemetery, studying each inscription and testing his sister Tanya's patience.

"Mike, let's go," she implored. "They're all the same."

"No, Tanya, they're not," the younger Spann replied. "There are stories behind them."

It is Mike Spann's story that draws Johnny Spann to Arlington now.

There is no greater objective for the grieving father these days than gathering the facts behind the uprising on Nov. 25, 2001, the makeshift prison in Afghanistan where his son became the first American casualty of the Afghan war.

Spann, a 56-year-old real estate company owner from Winfield, Ala., visited Mike Spann's grave last month for the third time in as many days. The elder Spann placed flowers and contemplated the chain of events that put his son in a national cemetery.

Upon returning to his rental car at the roadside, he wiped tears from his eyes. "Even after four years, it doesn't get any easier," Spann said.

Articulate and folksy, with combed-back hair that is two shades of gray, Spann thumps through a sheaf of documents and explains his son's last living moments with methodical calm. It is the same trait he displayed daily at the trial of John Walker Lindh, the American fighting alongside the Taliban.

Spann is conducting his own investigation into the origins of the riot at the prison in Mazar-e-Sharif where suspected Taliban support-

ers were held. U.S. government agencies, Spann said, are not inclined to piece together the entire story.

By investigating for himself, "No lies get told and nothing gets covered up," he said.

During his visit to Washington, Spann shared with The Associated Press a videotape that shows the two hours leading up to the fatal riot.

Spann contends the last two minutes of footage prove the uprising began with a planned gre-

nade attack inside the prison building rather than a spontaneous scuffle outside where his son was interviewing prisoners, including Lindh.

The distinction could be critical in Lindh's quest to get clemency for his 20-year prison term. One of the most serious charges against Lindh was that the uprising was planned the night before, yet he did not warn Michael Spann.

At trial, Lindh claimed no knowledge of the riot plot. The judge seemed to agree. If there were evidence that Lindh was responsible for the younger Spann's death, the judge said, then a plea bargain would not have been accepted that spared Lindh more serious charges, such as murder or treason.

Spann's father is convinced that such evidence exists.



Michael Spann



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2 Marines wounded

KABUL, Afghanistan — Militants armed with rockets and machine guns ambushed Marines patrolling in eastern Afghanistan, wounding two of the American troops, the military said.

The patrol came under attack on Saturday in an area north of the city of Jalalabad and close to the Pakistani border, and the U.S. military said. The assailants quickly retreated, it said.

The two injured Marines continued with their mission after treatment at the scene for shrapnel wounds.

U.S. and Afghan government troops clash regularly with mili-

From The Associated Press



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IN THE WORLD

Pope leaves Rome hospital

BY AIDAN LEWIS

The Associated Press

ROME — With thousands cheering him on, Pope John Paul II returned to the Vatican on Sunday, two weeks after undergoing throat surgery to ease his breathing problems and hours after greeting pilgrims in a raspy voice that raised hopes he would fully recover.

The 84-year-old pope crossed himself just before he left Rome's Gemelli Polyclinic hospital in a gray Mercedes minivan with tinted windows rather than in the glass-paneled popemobile he used after a previous hospitalization last month.

A television camera inside the van showed John Paul on his way back to the floodlit Vatican as he waved through a partially open window at the thousands of

Romans and tourists who lined the nearly three mile route. His motorcade drove beneath the Arch of the Bells and into St. Peter's Square just as night fell.

Patients in robes ventured out onto their balconies to bid the pope farewell, and cries of "Viva il Papa!" ("Long live the pope!") were heard as the van made the trip back to the Holy See.

Earlier Sunday, the pope spoke just a few words to the faithful gathered beneath his 10th-floor hospital suite, waving and making the sign of the cross with a steady hand.

"Dear brothers and sisters, thank you for your visit," he said, reading from a sheet of paper. "To everyone, have a good Sunday and a good week."

It was the first time since his Feb. 24 operation to insert a breathing tube in his windpipe

that John Paul addressed the faithful in remarks carried live. In three previous appearances, the pope had remained silent.

The Vatican's brief statement announcing his release made clear that the pope was not cured but was well enough to continue his recovery back at St. Peter's.

The Holy See had said last week that John Paul would be released in time for Holy Week celebrations, which begin on March 20 with Palm Sunday and culminate a week later with Easter.

The Holy See did not say whether the breathing tube had been removed or replaced with another type designed to make it easier for him to speak. His next health update was expected on Monday.

The pope's speaking difficulties are complicated by Parkinson's disease, raising concerns over John Paul's ability to communicate and guide the world's 1 billion Roman Catholics.



Pope John Paul II waves Sunday as he arrives at the Vatican after leaving Gemelli Polyclinic hospital, in Rome. Seated behind him is Sister Luisa. The pontiff had been hospitalized with a breathing crisis.

Love Stars and Stripes' Photo of the Day feature?



BY HUSSEIN DAKROUB

The Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Syria has withdrawn nearly a third of its troops from Lebanon, a senior officer said Sunday, but the Lebanese foreign minister said a date for a complete withdrawal would not be set until a meeting of the military leadership of the two countries that was scheduled for April 7.

Meanwhile, a pro-Syrian rally organized by Hezbollah drew at least 100,000 protesters in the southern market town of Nabatiyeh.

They burned Syrian flags and waved posters of Syrian President Bashar Assad — the second such rally the militant Shiite Muslim group has sponsored in a week.

The senior Syrian officer said about 4,000 soldiers had crossed the border into Syria since the pullout began on Tuesday and the remaining 10,000 were in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley.

"Another 4,000 soldiers in Lebanon's central

mountains have redeployed to the Bekaa region. This is in addition to 6,000 troops already stationed in the Bekaa," the military official said on condition of anonymity.

He said the fate of the 10,000 troops remaining in the Bekaa would be discussed by the April 7 military commission.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Mahmoud Hamoud also said the joint military commission would set the "duration, time and location in these matters." Hamoud did not mention a specific date for the meeting, but the officer said it was to be held on April 7.

Hamoud made his remarks after meeting with U.N. envoy Terje Roed-Larsen in Beirut, a day after Roed-Larsen had visited Assad.

President Bush, who repeatedly has called for a full Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, wants Syria to move out before Lebanon's parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in April and May.

Asked if the final withdrawal could take place before the elections, Hamoud said it was up to the joint military commission to decide.

Some say U.N. rights commission needs reform to regain credibility

BY SAM CAGE

The Associated Press

GENEVA — The U.N. Human Rights Commission must reform itself to restore its sinking credibility, say rights groups who accuse the most-offending countries of using their membership in the agency to protect each other from condemnation.

"The commission has become a refuge for governments like Sudan, which should be in the dock rather than on the top U.N. rights body," said Kenneth Roth, executive director of the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

The U.N. commission — which starts its annual six-week session

Monday — must address long-standing problems, in particular that some of its 53 member states "routinely resort to double standards in addressing country situations," officials of Amnesty International said.

Several possible changes have been suggested, including extending participation in the watchdog agency to all U.N. members, or excluding those with poor records of their own.

Under U.N. rules, members are picked by regional groups. Current member states that have been criticized for their records include China, Cuba, Nepal, Russia and Zimbabwe.

"The commission must focus

on protecting human rights, instead of blocking criticism of members that commit serious rights abuses," Roth told reporters last week.

A high-level U.N. panel has reported that the commission's ability to promote respect for human rights "has been undermined by eroding credibility."

About half the commission's current members will attend this session "not to promote human rights, but to undermine them," and this is reducing the credibility of the whole United Nations organization, Roth said.

"There is a question of whether the commission in its current form is a viable method of protecting human rights," Roth told reporters.

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China testing AIDS vaccine on humans

The Associated Press

BEIJING — China has begun conducting the first stage of testing of a new AIDS vaccine on eight volunteers, the government said.

The testing began Saturday, when the volunteers received physical checkups and signed waivers, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

A total of 49 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 50 will be part of the tests, to take place in three stages, said Xinhua, citing Chen Jie, director of the disease control agency in southern China's Guangxi region.

The first stage of testing will last 14 months, Xinhua said. It didn't say what the stage was meant to test, but said the second would cover the "immune nature and safety of the vaccine."

The agency didn't give any other details of the tests.

Chinese drug regulators approved the tests last November.

At that time, state media said the vaccine, already tested on monkeys, was developed by Chinese scientists who have studied the genetics of the AIDS virus since 1996.

China says it has 840,000 people infected with the AIDS virus and 80,000 with the full-blown disease. But health experts say the true figures are much higher and warn that China could have 10 million people infected by 2010 unless it takes urgent action.

After years of denying that the disease was a problem, the communist government has become more open about its AIDS epidemic, though activists are still regularly detained and harassed.

In the world's biggest study of an experimental AIDS vaccine, Thai and U.S. researchers have been testing a combination of two drugs on 16,000 Thai volunteers since 2003.



KARIN COOPER, CBS NEWS/AP

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice appears Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation" in Washington, D.C.

Rice entering diplomatic fray to lure N. Korea back to talks

BY BURT HERMAN

The Associated Press

SEOUL — Condoleezza Rice is the latest entrant in a flurry of Asian diplomacy aimed at luring North Korea back to disarmament talks, with the two-year-old crisis at a new high since the North claimed last month it has nuclear weapons and would boycott the deadlocked talks.

The U.S. secretary of state's trip starting Monday to China, Japan and South Korea is her first to the region since taking the top spot at the State Department, and is to "review with our partners our diplomatic efforts to convene the next round of six-party talks," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

Since the North claimed on Feb. 10 that it has nuclear weapons and would stay away from the nuclear negotiations, the other countries involved in the talks — China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States — have sent envoys scurrying across the continent.

But breakthroughs and bold proposals have been scarce, as with evidence proving the North really has nuclear bombs.

It was Rice's comment during her confirmation hearings, grouping North Korea among the world's "outposts of tyranny," that the North seized on as a reason for shutting the nuclear talks. The North has also taken President Bush's sweeping rhetoric on

spreading freedom around the world as tacitly aimed at the overthrow of Kim Jong Il's regime.

And North Korea is sure to scrutinize the Bush administration's recent nomination of one of the North's most outspoken critics — top arms control official John Bolton — as its ambassador to the United Nations.

North Korea might worry that Bolton will press the U.N. Security Council for sanctions against the North, said Peter Beck, Seoul-based director of the North East Asia Project for the International Crisis Group think tank.

The North has hinted at possible compromises. Kim Jong Il told a visiting Chinese diplomat his country would return to the talks if the United States shows "trustworthy sincerity." North Korea watchers are also pondering why it canceled a session of its rubber-stamp legislature set for this month.

The hand-picked loyalists in the chamber were expected to strongly endorse the government's decision to stay away from the nuclear talks. Some analysts have speculated that North Korea put off the session to leave room for it to back down amid strong pressure — even from close ally China.

"With China's cooperation, I believe the North's attitude has become more conciliatory than when it declared that it has nuclear weapons on Feb. 10," said Yu Ho-yeol, a North Korean studies professor at Korea University in Seoul.

Thousands of Indonesians face starvation

JAKARTA, Indonesia — As many as 50,000 villagers are on the brink of starvation because of severe drought in Indonesia's remote southeast, local officials said Sunday.

Poor harvests from a lack of rainfall threaten about 33,000 people in Lembata district in the province of East Nusa Tenggara, while 17,000 others in Solor district have run out of food, the district chiefs said.

"These villages are already poor," said Felix Fernandes, chief of Solor district. "Hundreds of hectares of corn and rice fields are parched because of no rain in the past months."

Andreas Dulimannik, chief of Lembata district, said food aid was urgently needed to head off famine. The provincial government has distributed 45 tons of rice, but it wasn't sufficient, he said.

Dulimannik said no deaths have been reported so far but added "the villagers are being threatened by starvation."

The drought-affected areas are located about 870 miles southeast of the capital, Jakarta.

Islamic militants to hold secret primaries

JERUSALEM — Hamas will conduct secret primaries to choose its candidates for parliamentary elections in July, the Islamic militant group's first major electoral test, a West Bank leader said Sunday.

Over the weekend, Hamas announced it is participating in the elections, challenging Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement, which has dominated Palestinian politics for four decades.

Hamas' decision to compete, coupled with its observance of an official truce with Israel, is a major step in what some see as the group's gradual transformation into a political party.

Hamas is expected to make a strong showing in the election, but it remains unclear to what degree it will become involved in the Abbas government, including future negotiations with Israel.

Hamas, Fatah supporters clash

HEBRON, West Bank — Hundreds of student supporters of the militant Hamas group clashed with supporters of Mahmoud Abbas' ruling Fatah party, throwing punches, sticks and stones during a Hamas campaign rally for student council elections.

Hospital officials said at least nine people were injured, including an Agence France-Presse photographer who received five stitches in the head.

The massive brawl erupted when several hundred Fatah supporters at Hebron University in the West Bank started shouting their own party's slogans in the midst of a large Hamas rally. Harsh words erupted into a fight, sending photographers and cameramen at the scene running for cover.

Student supporters of the militant Islamic Jihad intervened, acting as a buffer and eventually ending the violent fight between the two parties.

From The Associated Press

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IN THE STATES

Gunner kills 7, self at Wis. hotel

BY JULIET WILLIAMS
AND RYAN NAKASHIMA

The Associated Press

BROOKFIELD, Wis. — In a minute, a quiet church service at a suburban Milwaukee hotel turned into bloodbath.

Terry Ratzmann, a buttoned-down churchgoer known for sharing his homegrown vegetables with his neighbors, walked into the room and fired 22 rounds from a 9 mm handgun.

One of Ratzmann's friends begged him to stop, calling him by name and saying "Stop, stop, why?" Police Capt. Phil Horter said.

Chandra Frazier dived under a chair. The man sitting in it died.

"I just remember crawling on the carpet and just praying, screaming out and praying," Frazier told "Good Morning America" on Sunday.

Before it was over, seven people, including the church's minister and his teenage son, were killed and four others wounded.

Ratzmann then took his own life, police said.

Although he left no suicide note and gave no explanation for the killings, investigators said Ratzmann was on the verge of losing his job and was upset over a sermon he heard two weeks ago.

It was unclear what specifically upset him, but Ratzmann was a member of the Living Church of God, a denomination whose leader recently prophesied that end times are near.

Fifty to 60 people were at Saturday's weekly meeting, and anyone in Ratzmann's path appeared to be a target. He even dropped a magazine and reloaded another.

The church's minister, Randy L. Gregory, 51, and his son, James Gregory, 16, died, along



From left, Chelsey Porth, Kaitlin Schaefer, Ariel Reuter and Kelly Rooney, all of New Berlin, Wis., leave flowers Saturday outside the Sheraton Hotel in Brookfield, Wis. A gunman opened fire Saturday at a church service being held at the hotel, killing seven and himself and wounding several others, police said.

with Harold Diekmeyer, 74; Richard Reeves, 58; Bart Oliver, 15; Gloria Critari, 55; and Gerald A. Miller, 44, according to police and published reports.

Marjane Gregory, 52, was hospitalized in critical condition and Matthew P. Kaulbach, 21, and Angel M. Varichak were hospitalized in satisfactory condition Sunday, a hospital spokeswoman said. A 10-year-old girl police identified as Lindsay also remained hospitalized.

The church group was 20 or 30 minutes into Saturday's service when the shots rang out.

Ratzmann regularly attended the gatherings at the Sheraton each Saturday he did not have a building of

his own. But Frazier said Ratzmann walked out of a recent sermon "sort of in a huff."

"Something that the minister said he was upset about. I'm not quite sure what exactly," she said.

During the shooting rampage, Ratzmann told the friend who approached him that he was upset, said Waukesha County District Attorney Paul Bucher, although he was unsure over what.

He was not known to have threatened anyone and had no criminal record, police said. They seized three computers, a 22-caliber rifle and a box of bullets from the modest two-story home Ratzmann shared with his mother and adult sister.

Neighbors said Ratzmann built his own greenhouse, kept a well-tended garden and even used humane traps to free squirrels that got in the yard.

"He wasn't a dark guy. He was average Joe," said Shane Colwell, a neighbor who knew Ratzmann for about a decade. "It's not like he ever pushed his beliefs on anyone else."

But another neighbor called Ratzmann a drinker, and church members said he struggled with depression for years.

The district attorney said Ratzmann was on the verge of losing his job with a Waukesha County firm, but he would not name it or say what it did. Colwell said Ratzmann told him he was a computer technician.

Rice 'can't imagine' running for president

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice described herself Friday as "mildly pro-choice" and "kind of libertarian" on abortion as she once again ruled out running for president.

Rice told The Washington Times last week she "can't imagine" running to succeed her boss and that she is "not trying to be elected." The State Department released a transcript of the interview Saturday.

She closed the door in appearances on Sunday talk shows, telling NBC's "Meet the Press." "I will not run for president of the United States."

"I won't run," she told ABC's "This Week." "I won't. How's that? Is that categorical enough?"

The Republican platform is strongly anti-abortion, and abortion opponents play a big role in many primaries. Rice explicated her views when a questioner from the newspaper told her that the written record was murky.

"If you go back to 2000 when I helped the president in the campaign," she said, "I said that I was, in effect, kind of libertarian on this issue. And meaning by that, that I have been concerned about a government role in this issue. I am a strong proponent of parental choice — of parental notification. I am a strong proponent of a ban on late-term abortion. ... I've called myself at times mildly pro-choice."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Federal court OKs phone number-switching rules

BY GENARO C. ARMAS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal court on Friday upheld the bulk of Federal Communications Commission rules that allow consumers to keep their phone numbers when they switch providers.

However, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that smaller traditional-area phone companies didn't have to honor customer requests to transfer a landline number to a cell phone.

The court said the agency needed to study further the impact of the new rules on small companies before the guidelines could go back into effect in those cases. The companies, which serve mainly rural areas, can still voluntarily switch home numbers to a cell phone.

One consumer group said the decision might affect companies

that serve as much as 10 percent of the U.S. population, or more than 20 million people.

"We hope the FCC will go back and fill in the record and help consumers in small, rural markets have the flexibility to take their numbers to the provider of their choice," said Gene Kimmelman, senior policy director at Consumers Union, the publisher of Consumer Reports magazine.

FCC Chairman Michael Powell said he was confident the agency would respond quickly to the court's request.

The ruling was one of two decisions from the appeals court Friday involving the FCC's number-switching rules. The court upheld the remainder of those rules.

According to the FCC, roughly 10 million cell customers have transferred their numbers to new providers since the rules went into effect in November 2003.

Atlanta shooting suspect seen differently by family, neighbors

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Two pictures have emerged of the man police say went on a bloody rampage through Atlanta — allegedly killing a judge and as many as three others before his arrest Saturday at a suburban apartment complex.

Family members describe Brian Nichols as a "good person" who came from a stable home and avoided the temptations of the street.

Former classmates and coaches, on the other hand, recall him as a physically intimidating martial arts expert with a knack for trouble.

Police say Nichols, a former computer technician who was on trial for rape, overpowered a female sheriff's deputy Friday and shot and killed Judge Rowland Barnes, who was presiding over his case. He also is accused of killing the judge's court reporter and a deputy who tried to stop him as he fled the downtown courthouse.

Nichols is also a suspect in the shooting death of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agent



Nichols

David Wilhelm, whose body was found Saturday in north Atlanta.

"We're trying to understand this whole thing," Nichols' sister-in-law Feliza Nichols said from her home in the Plantation, Fla.

Nichols, briefly a student at Kutztown University in eastern Pennsylvania, left the university in the fall semester of his sophomore year. He had been arrested at least three times during his short stay at the university.

Nick Pergine, who played football with Nichols at Kutztown, said Nichols' massive physical presence and martial arts skills earned him a reputation as someone to be careful around.

"He was a bad dude," Pergine said. "You didn't mess with him."

After dropping out of school, Nichols moved to Georgia in 1995.

He lived in an apartment complex in Atlanta, where a neighbor described him as a "nice space" because he would occasionally let his pit bull roam around the complex.

Nichols' last known job was working as a computer technician for a subsidiary of Atlanta-based shipping giant UPS.

Feliza Nichols says the portrait of her 33-year-old brother-in-law as a bloodthirsty killer doesn't make sense. "He's a good person," she said.



Marchers gather on the steps of the state Capitol in Montgomery, Ala., during the re-enactment of the Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march on Saturday.

Civil rights marchers seeking extension of Voting Rights Act

BY SAMIRA JAFARI

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Black politicians must urge Congress to extend the Voting Rights Act, civil rights leaders said Saturday at the finale of the re-enactment of the Selma-to-Montgomery march that helped lead to passage of the law.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 "was the single most significant piece of legislation in the century," the Rev. Joseph Lowery, a co-founder of the Atlanta-based Southern Christian Leadership Conference, told a crowd of nearly 300 marchers at the state Capitol.

By 2001, he said, blacks held major office in Alabama, University of Alabama political scientist William Stewart said.

In 1965, no blacks held major office in Alabama, according to the most recent figures available from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

Across the South, the number has grown from 70 to nearly 7,000.

The first voting rights march was halted at the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma by state troopers

and sheriff's deputies who attacked activists with clubs and tear gas on March 7, 1965, "Bloody Sunday."

A second march two weeks later was led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and had the protection of a federal court order. Marchers went from the bridge over the Alabama River to the steps of the state Capitol in Montgomery.

The attack and the marches inspired passage of the Voting Rights Act, which barred obstacles such as literacy tests that were set up by segregationists to keep blacks from registering to vote.

Certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act, such as the use of federal examiners and a requirement for Justice Department approval of election law changes, will be up for renewal by Congress in 2007.

"I'm bringing a message to all elected officials," said Keif Schleifer, 43, of Atlanta, who walked the entire 54-mile trek with about 50 other people this past week.

"We've marched from Selma to Montgomery to exercise our patriotic right. We are watching your every action. We are holding you accountable. We are not going away."

Gridiron dinner features a comedy of errors

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush poked fun at himself at the press corps Saturday night and offered a new reason for overhauling the Social Security system.

Raising the name of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Bush said, "We have to fix it or Rumsfeld may never retire."

Bush noted — with a little help — the presence of a number of new Cabinet members attending the Gridiron Club's 120th annual dinner. Turning to Vice President

Dick Cheney, the president said, "Dick, maybe you can point them out to me."

Bush said anyone looking for a transcript of the evening's program should call Doug Wead, the longtime Bush family friend who recently made public tape recordings of private telephone conversations he had with Bush before he started running for president.

It was as close to "Saturday Night Live" as Washington gets, as journalists assumed the personas of politicians in song, dance and wisecracks.

The Gridiron Dinner is a journalistic tradition in which, for one night, members of the House of Representatives turn the tables on the powerful people they report and write about daily. The Gridiron Club's motto is to "sing, but never burn."

In a nod to 2008, they parodied the White House assistant press secretary, Chuck Hagel of Nebraska and Democratic Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, featured speakers at the white-tie dinner.

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Prepaid credit for teens

MarketWatch

NEW YORK — Teenagers spent an estimated \$175 billion last year, according to Teenage Research Unlimited, a market research company specializing in young adults.

Now credit card companies are rushing to capture that audience with prepaid cards, featuring celebrities such as rapper Usher and actress Hilary Duff, as well as cartoon characters like Hello Kitty.

Parents register their child for a card and then load it up with money. Some parents use the cards to give their kids funds for events such as back-to-school shopping, while others use it to dole out weekly allowances. They also can monitor their children's spending habits via the Internet.

Though the cards are touted as a great way for teens and preteens to learn how to manage money, this is one "money tool" you should steer clear of,

advised Janet Bodnar, executive editor of Kiplinger's Personal Finance. Kids aren't using such cards to learn about credit or money management, she said. "They want it because it's cool."

"It's not their money," Bodnar added, noting that many teenagers don't understand how credit works. "It's still mom and dad's money."

These prepaid debits also carry hefty charges. Not only will you pay for a card setup fee (anywhere from \$20 to \$50 per card), but you'll also pay monthly maintenance charges (about \$5). And many cards charge \$3 to \$5 each time you reload the accounts with money. Those fees add up quickly if you plan to use such a card for your child's allowance.

Stick to cash until your teenager has his or her own job. Bodnar recommends. Then let him or her open a checking account with a real debit card.

EXCHANGE RATES

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Dollar buys	76.763
British pound	\$1.58
Japanese yen (March 14)	182.00
South Korean won (March 13)	976.50
Commercial rates	
Bahraini (Dinar)	0.377
British pound	\$1.9252
Canada (dollar)	1.243
Denmark (Krone)	5.53
Euro (Euro)	\$1.3459/0.743
Hong Kong (Dollar)	0.796
Hungary (Forint)	180.33
Island (Krona)	56.66
Israel (Sheqel)	4.295
Japan (Yen)	107.88
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2918
Norway (Krone)	4.6613
Philippines (Peso)	54.00
Singapore (Dollar)	1.769
Singapore (Dollar)	1.618
South Korea (Won)	1,000.10
Switzerland (Franc)	1.1488
Thailand (Baht)	38.75
Turkey (New Lira)	1,405
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banks in the country of issuance in Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For non-currency exchange rates, check with your local military financing facility. Commercial rates are inter-bank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign bank rates, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars, yen and the euro, which is represented in euros.)	

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc close	
Gold	\$436.20
Silver	\$7.575

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	1.50
Federal funds market rate	2.50
3-month bill	2.75
30-year bond	4.65
Source: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Tsunami victims' kin sue warning center

HONOLULU — The federal agency that operates the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center is being sued by Indian Ocean tsunami survivors and relatives of victims.

The suit alleges the center in Ewa Beach and other defendants did not do enough to protect people from the Dec. 26 tsunami, which killed as many as 300,000 people throughout southern Asia.

The lawsuit does not seek damages, but instead asks the court to preserve evidence for the plaintiffs so they can decide whether to pursue damages, an attorney said.

"At least they should have the option to know what is going on," said Edward Pagan, the U.S. attorney for the plaintiffs group, which includes at least 58 European survivors and family members of people killed in the disaster.

From The Associated Press

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FACES

From 'Sideways' to parting ways

Director Alexander Payne and wife Sandra Oh have gone from "Sideways" to parting ways, a spokeswoman told People magazine on Saturday. The Hollywood couple "have mutually decided to separate," the spokeswoman said. "They will remain friends."

The couple met five years ago and married in 2003.

Payne wrote and directed "Sideways," the comedy about two friends on a wine-tasting road trip through California. Payne shared the Academy Award with his writing partner for Best Adapted Screenplay. Oh, a former co-star on the HBO series "Arli\$e," was one of the stars of the film.



Oh and Payne

Rocker says he's happy to be drug free

Velvet Revolver frontman Scott Weiland says he is off drugs for good, according to the April issue of Esquire magazine.



Weiland

Weiland, whose band won a Grammy last month, credits his sobriety of more than a year to seeing his second marriage crumble because of his addiction.

Weiland, 37, said his "preoccupation with catching a buzz" began in his early teens, when he began drinking liquor. He tried cocaine in high school and had moved on to heroin by the time he was 24 and touring with his previous group, Stone Temple Pilots, saying it made him feel safe and more confident about his music.

He said he was motivated to clean up his act and try to get his family back after two arrests in 2003 — one for heroin and cocaine possession and the other for driving under the influence. "Right now, for the first time in my life, I'm finally happy," the singer told the magazine.

Stewart's marriage proposal accepted

Rod Stewart has proposed to his longtime girlfriend at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, Stewart's record company said Saturday.

Record label BMG said Stewart, 60, went down on one knee and proposed to his 33-year-old Penny Lancaster at the French landmark on Wednesday. She accepted.

"I left it this long, because I wanted to get it right this time," Stewart said in a statement. "I've never been in a happier and more in love than I am today."

Lancaster's agent, Nicholas Young, said the couple would make wedding plans once Stewart's divorce from model Rachel Hunter is finalized. The raspy-voiced singer was previously married to Alana Stewart.



Lancaster and Stewart

PETA targets J.Lo's fur-wearing ways

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals wants Jennifer Lopez to "Get Right" when it comes to fur.

Lopez introduced her Surface fashion collection during New York Fashion Week last month.

"Please don't support Jennifer Lopez or her bloody business," says a Web site — www.jloedoes.com — that the animal rights group has devoted to the singer, actress and now fashion designer.

Calling comment from Lopez's publicist went not immediately returned Friday.

The site encourages visitors to "write to J.Lo and tell her that promoting the violence of the fur industry is a low-down, dirty, rotten shame."

"J.Lo knows what animals who are killed for their skins are," the Web site reads. "PETA has contacted her with letters and videos no less than a dozen times. Lopez may try to convince her fans that her rabbit-trimmed jackets are a must-have, but what she won't tell you is that bunnies killed for fur coats scream as they are skinned alive."



Lopez



Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox

Robin Williams provides the voice of the animated character Fender in the movie "Robots."

Robin Williams tuned in to 'too' role in "Robots"

BY NANCY MILLS
New York Daily News

HOLLYWOOD

In an ideal world, Robin Williams would have been born a cartoon.

After all, merely human roles rarely give him the chance to free-associate, deliver dozens of accents and leap through his imagination the way no regular person ever does. And, let's face it, when he starts doing his shirk-offstage, he occasionally wears out his welcome.

With his outrageous personality, it's little wonder that Williams has a serious affinity for the animated world. He even took a stand for SpongeBob SquarePants on Oscar night, arriving with his mouth taped shut because producers rejected his plan to sing a satirical song about the undersea character.

"They tell me now that SpongeBob is gay," Williams said, referring to a conservative religious group's criticism that the "toon had a 'pro-homosexual' agenda. "SquarePants is not gay," Williams told the Kodak Theatre crowd. "TightPants" — maybe. SpongeBob HotPants? You go, girl!"

When he took the role of the Blue Genie in 1992's "Aladdin," Williams crafted one of the most indelible characters in animation history.

But with "Robots," it's possible that Williams addicts will begin calling him "Fender." Fender is Williams' first animated role since "Aladdin." The red robot with a coffee pot for a head may not look much like the 53-year-old comic, but they share a certain manic energy.

Fender is "a Skid Row bum, a man living hand to foot who puts the 'funk' in dysfunction," Williams says. He also talks non-stop — sound familiar? — and keeps losing body parts to rust.

The performance makes use of Williams' hyperactivity without, as he puts it, "my having to train. Animators can create the physicality I could never get near."

"You get a bit of carte blanche," he adds. "I love doing the voices. I can play and create. You can't find too many parts that allow you such freedom — and it's easier to look at myself."

Since he could easily supply the voices for an entire cast of animated characters, cartoons could be Williams' main source of income, if he didn't love doing standup comedy and making live-action movies. Two of the latter will open this year, the coming-of-age tale "House of D" (opening next month) and a black comedy, "The Big White."

Later this year, he'll start production on two more. One is the drama "The Night Listener," based on an Armistead Maupin story. The other is "RV," a comedy Williams says is about "a blue-state guy traveling in a red state."

"I love doing the voices. I can play and create. You can't find too many parts that allow you such freedom — and it's easier to look at myself."

Robin Williams
Voice of Fender in "Robots"

For "Robots," director Chris Wedge says all he had to do was turn Williams loose.

"We'd bring Robin ideas and script pages, and he'd very politely read the words we'd written," Wedge says. "Then he'd start lifting off. He'd hit on something and go off for 20 minutes. The glass in the booth would be full of condensation."

Although Wedge admits, "We were able to use only about 1 percent of what he created," they did manage to include his riff on "Singin' in the Rain."

And the eventual DVD outtakes will probably feature a sequence in which Fender's unattached right hand tries to romance his equally on-the-loose left hand — in a heavy Hispanic accent.

Set in a computer-generated world inhabited by mechanical people, "Robots" tells the story of idealistic young Rodney Copperbottom (voiced by Ewan McGregor), who dreams of being an inventor and sets off for the big city with his father's blessing. Naturally, his life does not go smoothly, even with Fender as a close friend.

Williams related to the follow-your-dreams scenario. "I loved the scenes between Rodney and his father because of my dad," he says.

"My dad told me, 'Do what you want to do. I will help you. If you want to be a professional, that's great. Just have a backup profession.'"

"I actually went to one wedding class, and the guy teaching it had one eye because he lost the other in a welding accident," he adds.

"But my dad was good with support.

As a father of three — Zach, 21, Zeldia, 15, and Cody, 13 — Williams is trying to be equally supportive.

"Zach is studying linguistics right now," he says. "Maybe he'll open a syntax repair shop. Maybe he'll work for a few years and then study law."

"Cody has got a real dry sense of humor," he adds. "He writes very layered, intense poetry. And Zeldia has the voices." She'll appear with her father in "House of D."

After some troubled years in which he fought through drug addiction and a messy divorce, Williams seems to be at a peaceful point in his life. Even he has noticed that his comic libido may finally be starting to ebb.

"My wife, Marisa, says that if more than two people come into a room, I go into a certain mode," he says. "But the older I get, the mode gets less like, 'Hello!'"

"It's tiring, but it's invigorating," he adds. "Drama is cathartic, but you feed off comedy. It builds you."

"And sometimes it works the other way. If an audience is not laughing, you'll feed off them — sometimes in an angry way, but sometimes in a challenging way. I can get these people. What is the key?"

"Only later you find out they're deaf."

STARS AND STRIPES

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IRR story misleading

The story concerning the Individual Ready Reserve members called to active duty was a nice human interest article ("Individual Ready Reserve called up to active duty," Army's empty war slots," article, Jan. 21); however, it came across a little misleading.

It stated that 5,600 were activated. Fact is, that was the number called up. Of that number, a much smaller number were actually activated.

When I reported to Camp McGrady, Fort Jackson, S.C., they were expecting an activation of 87 soldiers. Only 35 showed up, of which 25 showed medically fit.

We were told the low turnout was the norm and when we asked what would happen to those who did not report, we were told that "it would be overwhelming for the Army to go after all those people."

Our inside joke was that we were "the few, the proud, the stupid" for reporting.

Kidding aside, I am proud to serve, as are the others who did answer the call. I was in the National Guard for 13 years before getting out. Without any obligation, I voluntarily joined the IRR. I was told the IRR would only be called for an extreme emergency. I figured, if they needed me that bad, I would be willing to serve.

A one-star medal the comment, while eating at the chow hall at Camp McGrady, "The IRR is the third string and there is no one left on the bench." I am proud to have made it to the first string.

It is my opinion that the IRR system is seriously dysfunctional, which is a reflection on the military's command centers. It needs to be managed competently or done away with.

Capt. Andy Timmerman

Baghdad

Let soldiers be soldiers

Our rules of engagement are a guideline designed to allow soldiers to make decisions based on the situation to keep themselves, their fellow soldiers and innocent bystanders safe from bodily harm.

ROE is a good concept but, as usual, the language is around the most polluted and stagnant it gets. We all know for example that a person who is firing at you can be engaged and killed to prevent bodily harm. What if an explosion had just gone off and you see a plain-clothes person with an AK-47 waving it in the air. He isn't pointing it at you — yet. Would you engage him?

I would. Unfortunately, some people don't think he posed enough of a threat to engage. Every Iraqi house is allowed to have and maintain one AK-47. The rule doesn't allow them to carry it outside. The situation never remains in the house.

Now if you see someone with the AK-47 outside, you are not supposed to engage unless they are pointing it at you or firing at you; basically, wait until he has as much of a chance to kill you as you do him and then decide whether you should engage him or not.

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not. I hope you make the right decisions and are accurate. All of this unwarranted baggage to the ROE is going to lead to one unfortunate consequence: more soldiers are going to be going home in coffins.

Close up the ROE. Allow soldiers to be soldiers.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Stemen

Camp Manhattan, Iraq

'Doonesbury' offers diversity

This letter is in response to "Trudeaup's piece of crap" (letter, March 2) in which the letter writer described "Doonesbury" as, let me get this right, "that left-wing-substantive-slendering piece-of-crap comic by Trudeau."

I assume, of course, that the right-wing comic "Moose" Fillmore, by Bruce Tinsley, causes equal offense. All Stars and Stripes is doing is being fair and balanced. The men and women of the military have a diverse set of views — as evidenced, for example, by the recent debate over the separation of church and state in letters to the editor.

Stars and Stripes provides a great service to all of us, and it is not the job of the paper to simply be a mouthpiece for certain political viewpoints. As in any decent democracy, allowing for a free and open press is part of the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan. Maybe we should set the example by keeping our own publications free and open to divergent sets of views, even the comic strips.

Lt. Jg. Seth Nye

Bagdam, Afghanistan

Vacations not why we serve

I'm disheartened to see that now even my fellow troops noncommissioned officers are failing to recognize our Army's purpose and mission. In his March 6 letter "Europe's hardship tours" ("Europe and Missions: editorial only," Sgt. 1st Class David Smoak stated that he'd like to take

his family to visit various historic European countries for only the price of gasoline. I have some news for that reader: Vacations are not the purpose of stationing our military personnel overseas (shocking, I know).

We all know that the biggest reason American troops are stationed in Germany is because there used to be a perceived threat of a Soviet invasion of Central Europe. Now that that particular threat no longer truly exists, our forces in Europe are being realigned to more-effective stations elsewhere.

Someone will end up missing out in the future on all the great opportunities of being assigned to Germany or Italy. Had our mission there been one of leisure, I might agree that it's a shame the reader in question never got to spend a three-year tour there. Then he could have spent more than half of it in Bosnia or Kosovo, away from his family, battling not only the summer heat but also the bitter winter of the Balkans. Anyhow, that's what was going on in Germany when I was there.

It still am I was great to go visit places in Denmark and Poland when I was stationed in Germany, but the opportunity was rare, especially with having to take care of my family first. Some folks spend money every year in vacation in the Czech Republic or Holland. The drawbacks were plenty as well, though. Face it, a round-trip plane ticket to the United States for a family isn't cheap. Especially not on the little note a soldier in today's Army can reasonably expect to have. So you can rule out seeing your family back home during that time.

The Exceptional Family Member Program makes for some difficulty in a lot of cases for soldiers to even take their families over there, since many dependents require certain kinds of care that are not available over there or are just hard to live within a short distance of the nearest hospital. Last I checked, gasoline over there was about three to four times as expensive as it is in America. Diesel fuel isn't much better.

Oh, and I do hope your car is in spectacular shape if you're headed that way. The vehicle inspections over there aren't as brutal, especially for older cars. When the last time your home state required you to put your car on a brake test to make sure your wheels were braking exactly the same? Want parts to get car up to standard? Be prepared to pay a lot and wait a while. You may even have to find suitable substitutes on the German economy, which does pay for it. In the meantime, der why soldiers get paid a cost of living allowance in Europe?

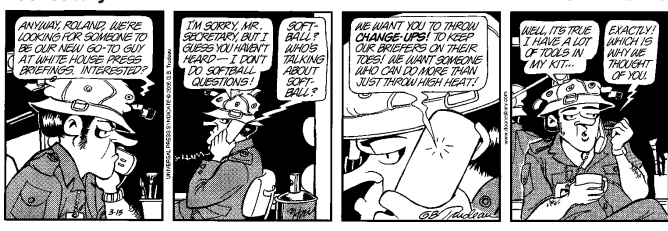
If you want to go on vacation instead of an assignment, then wait until your leave and earnings statement tells you that you've got 20 years in service, then retire and go wherever you please. Or just take some leave and do what the rest of the world does pay for. In the meantime, please mind the fact that the Army isn't here to serve you; it's there other way around.

Army Sgt. 1st Class James A. Stevens III

Camp Page, South Korea

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury



OPINION

Wars take turns, and reactions affect results

BY THEODORE L. GATCHEL
The Providence (R.I.) Journal

Like the tides, the fortunes of war tend to ebb and flow over the course of a conflict. How a nation deals with the setbacks that inevitably occur in war tells much about that nation's people and whether they have what it takes to prevail over a determined enemy.

The Battle of the Bulge, in World War II, and the 1968 communist Tet offensive, in Vietnam, illustrate how two different generations of Americans dealt with such setbacks.

As Christmas 1944 approached in Europe, the Allies were generally optimistic. American forces had reached the German border, and speculation about how long the war would last was a popular pastime.

On the morning of Dec. 16, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme commander of the Western Allies in Europe, received a letter from British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery requesting permission to take Christmas leave. In the letter was a reminder from Montgomery of a bet made earlier that the war would be over by Christmas.

The front running through Belgium's Ardennes Forest was a particularly quiet one.

The quiet was shattered on the same day that Eisenhower received this letter by a German attack that drove deep enough into the Allied lines to produce the "bulge" that gave the resulting battle its name. The New York Times called the setback "the worst since that of the Philippines."

That characterization was no exaggeration. Overcoming the initial shock, the Allies eventually con-

tained the German attack and then defeated it. But doing so cost the Americans roughly 80,000 casualties, including 8,000 killed and 20,000 captured or missing.

Much of the public's attention became focused on the Belgian town of Bastogne, an important road junction that the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division and other units held against heavy German pressure until relieved, on Dec. 26. When the American commander answered a German ultimatum to surrender with the terse reply "Nuts," Bastogne became a symbol of heroic resistance.

Perhaps as a result, Americans managed to maintain their faith in ultimate victory. The New York Times complained about the delayed release of news from the front, and noted common problems that had let the Germans achieve surprise — but it also cautioned Americans not to succumb to despair. The Allies won the spot while the battle continued.

The paper also raised the possibility that the German attack might even prove to be fortuitous by having offered the Allies the chance to inflict more damage on the Germans more quickly than would otherwise have been possible. When the fighting ended, the Americans had no doubt that the Allies had won a decisive victory.

Twenty-four years after the Battle of the Bulge, Americans reacted in a very different way to a surprise enemy attack that had some remarkable similarities to the German one of 1944.

As the Vietnamese Lunar New Year celebration, called Tet, approached in 1968, the overall situation appeared to be calm. The communists had agreed to a truce, and a large percentage of South Vietnamese soldiers were allowed to



GERARD F. FORKEN/Stars and Stripes

South Vietnamese troops help a wounded buddy in a street fight near the presidential palace in Saigon on Feb. 3, 1968, during the Tet Offensive.

take leave. Earlier, however, Gen. Earle Wheeler, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Detroit audience that although steady progress was being made in Vietnam, the communists might still try something "similar to the desperate effort of the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge."

On Jan. 31, 1968, the Viet Cong and their North Vietnamese allies did just what Wheeler had feared by launching a series of attacks on cities throughout Vietnam. Overcoming the shock of having been caught off guard, South Vietnamese and allied forces recovered and went on the offensive. Much of the world's attention became riveted on a group of U.S. Marines and Vietnamese rangers who were besieged in an isolated outpost near



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Two U.S. soldiers dug into the snow and dirt east of Bastogne, Belgium, man .50-caliber machine guns as they keep an eye out for German troops during the Battle of the Bulge in January 1945.

the Laotian border named Khe Sanh.

Yet instead of being regarded as a heroic stand, as Bastogne had been, Khe Sanh was characterized by most of the media as a military disaster caused by bad judgment. Interminable comparisons were made to the 1954 French defeat at a similar outpost at Dien Bien Phu, and every effort was made to cast the battle in a bad light.

Second-guessing by the media was rampant and often wrong. Peter Braestrup, Saigon bureau chief for The Washington Post during Tet, later noted, "Rarely has contemporary crisis-journalism turned out, in retrospect, to have veered so widely from reality."

In reality, the communists suffered a decisive defeat. They failed to achieve any of their military or

political goals, and the fighting destroyed whatever remained of the Viet Cong — forcing the communists to rely increasingly on regular forces from North Vietnam.

But despite that reality, many Americans came to see Tet as a defeat that produced a corresponding loss of support for the war. The cause for that misperception remains the subject of debate, but it raises an important question for today.

When a setback occurs in the war on terrorism — and such a setback is almost inevitable — will Americans react as they did in 1944, or as they did in 1968?

Marine Col. Theodore L. Gatchel (retired) is a military historian and professor of operations at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, R.I. The views here are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the college, the Navy or the Defense Department.

Congress must ensure bill isn't morally bankrupt

BY DALE McFEATHERS
Scraps Howard

The bankruptcy bill that just passed the Senate and is assured of House passage is being described as "the most sweeping" and "most significant" in bankruptcy laws in 27 years and as a political victory for President Bush.

A political victory for Bush and the credit-card and banking industries, yes. But as for "sweeping" and "significant," only time will tell.

A preliminary glance at the final product suggests that it is considerably more modest than "sweeping." And how controversial could a measure be that passed the fractious Senate 74-25? It would affect, according to bankruptcy experts, somewhere between 30,000 and 210,000 people a year, largely by forcing them to opt for Chapter 13 bankruptcy, where some repayment is required, rather than Chapter 7, which erases debts altogether. And it does underscore a fundamental commercial principle that good-faith loans should be repaid.

The terms of the bill are hardly Dickensian. In essence, bankruptcy filers with incomes above their state's median income and with the wherewithal that a judge determines would allow them to repay \$100 a

month over five years — a total of \$6,000 — would have to file under Chapter 13.

The bill also tightens a loophole that allowed potential bankrupts to shield their assets by buying extravagant homes in states like Florida and Texas. The "homestead exemption" has been tightened to \$125,000 for property bought within 30 months of filing.

The bill shields retirement benefits up to \$1 million, but it also ordains that child sup-

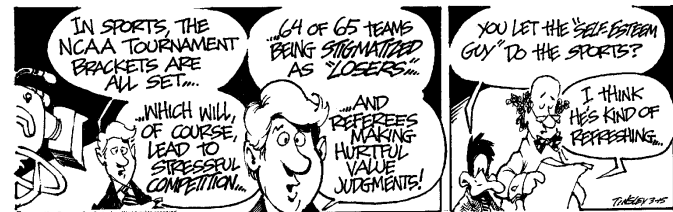
port, alimony, student loans and most tax obligations cannot be wiped out by filing for bankruptcy.

There is a large loophole for residents of states that sanction asset-protection trusts, shields trusted from the bankruptcy laws set up by people who have some expectation of being sued, like doctors, but increasingly by executives wary of the new corporate liability laws. ...

Once having made this bankruptcy bill law, Congress has an obligation of its own. Lawmakers must be vigilant to see that the act is not an insurance policy for reckless lenders. And while Congress can't do much about [some causes of bankruptcy, such as] divorce or job loss, it can try to ensure that [another cause], severe illness, is not an automatic economic catastrophe for low- and middle-income families.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



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Fit on a flight

AK ANCHORAGE — A man denied alcohol during a United Airlines flight went on a rampage, breaking tray tables and other equipment, the FBI said.

Brian A. Casias, 35, has been charged with interfering with the flight crew on Flight 711 from Denver to Anchorage.

Casias of Commerce City, Colo., was heard swearing as he boarded the flight Tuesday, and the plane's captain advised him that he would not be served alcoholic beverages. When a flight attendant denied Casias' request for a drink, he allegedly threw his tray of food down and spat repeatedly on the floor, the FBI said.

Casias allegedly ripped the back of the seat and broke two tray tables, throwing them to the floor, the FBI said.

Casias also is accused of urinating on the floor of the lavatory, where he allegedly broke a hand-capped bar and a changing table. He also is accused of swearing repeatedly and of smoking several cigarettes on the plane.

Rapists drunk at center

FL ARCADIA — Violent sexual predators at a privately operated treatment center brew their own alcohol, wear "staggering drunk" and often have brutal fights, state investigators found.

A report by the Department of Children & Families' inspector general portrays the Florida Civil Commitment Center as a largely lawless place where rapists and child molesters freely consume alcohol and brawl.

"All residents and staff interviewed admitted 'everyone' knows the residents make and consume homemade alcohol, called 'buck,'" the report completed last month said. "Two residents during the investigative interview admitted being intoxicated at the time."

Foreign pledge protest

MD MILLERSVILLE — A ninth-grader is protesting his school's decision to retract the Pledge of Allegiance in foreign languages as part of National Foreign Language Week.

Patrick Linton said he and other students at Old Mill High School sat down rather than stand when the Pledge was read over the school's public address system in Russian. Linton's teacher told him if he had a problem he should leave the room.

He did, and did not plan to return this week.

"This is America, and we got soldiers at war," the 15-year-old said. "When you're saying the Pledge in a different language which nobody understands, that's not OK."

Tour boats seized

HI HONOLULU — Two tour boats owned by Dream Cruises were seized by the U.S. Marshals Service because the company is in default of a \$1.4 million mortgage on the vessels, according to officials and court documents.

The American Dream in Kewalo

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Basin and its sister ship the Kona Dream in Kona won't be allowed to operate until court proceedings are completed, a spokesman for the service said.

Deputy marshals posted "No trespassing" signs aboard the vessels while employees were allowed to remove personal belongings. About 75 employees are affected.

Dream Cruises President Michael Watson said he was surprised by the action. He acknowledged being a couple of months late on payments, but he said he was in discussions with the lender for a new payment plan.

Teachers dropping out

RI PROVIDENCE — Nineteen members of the faculty at troubled Hope High School have told administrators they intend to transfer to other schools, according to Hope administrators and state education officials.

Another 55 faculty told a screening committee they intend to stay at the school, which had faced a state takeover but will undergo widespread changes instead.

Some of the teachers who indicated they'll transfer told interviewers they had tired of past reform efforts, according to Frances Gallo, chief of administration. Many cited poor attendance, transportation problems, lack of disci-

pline and scheduling difficulties.

Girl stranded

TX DALLAS — A school bus driver accused of forcing a 5-year-old girl to get off the bus more than a mile from her scheduled stop was placed on paid administrative leave pending an investigation.

Jadian Anderson said the driver made her daughter, Syria, get off the bus after she complained that another student was hitting her.

"He did not leave her with another adult; he left her on the street," Anderson said. "He was very negligent, and he endangered my child."

Syria walked about a half-mile before a crossing guard saw her and noticed she was crying. While the guard was trying to figure out where she lived, a relative drove by, saw the girl and picked her up.

Dallas County Schools spokeswoman Deanne Hultender said that if the driver acted inappropriately, officials will "take the proper action."

Dorm shower cam

CT HAMDEN — A Quinnipiac University student has been sanctioned for allegedly hiding a video camera in a dormitory shower.

University officials refused to name the student and would not say what the sanctions were.

The student was sanctioned after a story about the hidden camera appeared in the student newspaper, the Chronicle.

Doug Manners, a sophomore journalism major from East Longmeadow, Mass., reportedly discovered the camera.

Manners noticed something with red lights attached to a shower grate in the Troup residence hall on Feb. 6, the Chronicle reported. He and his roommate took the grate out of the ceiling and found the camera, which was connected to an adapter and electrical cord.

The two students brought the camera to the dorm's residential assistant, who called campus security. Officers confiscated the equipment and inspected other bathrooms in the dorm.

DMV files stolen

NV NORTH LAS VEGAS — Personal information from more than 8,900 people was stolen when thieves broke into a Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles office, officials said Friday.

A computer taken during the break-in contained names, ages, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, photographs and signatures of southern Nevada residents who obtained driver's licenses between Nov. 25 and March 4 at the North Las Vegas office, state DMV chief Ginny Lewis said.

The DMV had previously maintained that the information on the computer stolen in Monday's break-in was encrypted, making it virtually useless to thieves.

But Lewis said Friday that Digital Corp., the Beaverton, Ore.-based company that provides digital driver's licenses in Nevada, told her Thursday the information was not encrypted, and was readily accessible.



Watch out, coming through Kate Pfeiffer tunnels her way out onto the street at the home of her grandmother, Valerie Pfeiffer, in Augusta, Maine.



Husband on the run Saad Mian runs from his wife, Sara, as she attempts to wallop him with a snowball during a family picnic at Menominee Park in Oshkosh, Wis.



Getting the job done

Edward Oliver, who works for the Anderson Parks and Recreation Department, paints a trash can green at the Darwin H. Wright Municipal Park in Anderson, S.C.



Winter fun Taking advantage of one of the last days of their winter vacation, Kristin Korona, top, and Danielle LaMontagne, both of Londonderry, N.H., test out the sledding hill at Roby Park in Nashua, N.H.



Enjoying the view Dick Droghei catches some air with his stunt kite at O.K. Ward Park in Chubbuck, Idaho.



Bringing down the house A bulldozer pushes together the remains of what used to be a two-room school in Ellis, Neb. Russ' Excavating of Beatrice knocked the building down after satisfying asbestos concerns raised by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, and the rubble will be burned and buried at a later date.



Peaceful sunset As the setting sun paints the sky, a cow and two calves walk high on a ridge near Belt, Mont.

Anti-Bush road rage

FL TAMPA — A man apparently enraged by a Bush-Cheney sticker on a woman's sport utility vehicle chased her for miles and tried to run her off the road while holding up an anti-Bush sign, police said.

"He told our officers that he just got mad at her, so he went after her," said police spokesman Joe Durkin.

Nathan Alan Winkler, 31, was freed on \$2,000 bail on a charge of aggravated stalking, which carries up to five years in prison.

No one answered the telephone Thursday at Winkler's home, but his father, John Winkler, said: "I know that he's very anti-Bush. But I don't see him doing anything like that. He's the least aggressive person I know."

Fernandez was taking her 10-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter to a ball field when the incident occurred.

Raise your right paw

AR BENTONVILLE — Prosecutors hoping for a witness in a murder case to roll over were barking up the wrong tree.

They sent out a batch of subpoenas for anyone who had contact with Albert K. Smith while he was jailed awaiting his murder trial.

One of those subpoenas went out to 5-year-old Murphy Smith — Smith's dog, it turned out.

The defendant had written his dog a letter from his cell, and that is how the shih tzu's name got on the witness list.

Prosecutors realized the mistake after the defendant's brother brought in Murphy to answer the subpoena and a deputy would not let them into the courthouse because no dogs were allowed.

Albert Smith is accused of shooting to death his ex-wife's boyfriend.

Twins neglected

NY LAKE CARMEL — A set of malnourished 7-year-old twins whose existence was a surprise to neighbors and school officials were found in a dirty, unkempt home in Putnam County, police said.

The twins, Cassidy and John Giordano, who weighed 41 and 30 pounds respectively, were being treated for malnourishment and isolation at Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla.

Their parents, Eda and James Giordano of Lake Carmel, were each charged with two counts of endangering a child and were released without bail. Their phone is unlisted and Town Court records did not show an attorney of record.

Chief Donald Smith of the Town of Kent police force, which covers Lake Carmel, said it had probably been several years since the children had left the house.

Drug blamed in murder

CO DENVER — Nobody disputes that Danny Pommerville beat his 64-year-old grandmother to death with wine bottles last August, leaving her to die in a pool of blood and fleeing the state in her car.

But a defense attorney for the 24-year-old man told jurors that her client was in a PCP-induced

rage. "He snapped. He flipped. The PCP kicked in," Deputy Public Defender Cynthia Mares said. "His grandmother was telling him that he was a loser and that he should be in prison the rest of his life, and he snapped. He doesn't remember most of what happened."

Pommerville is on trial on charges of first-degree murder in the death of his grandmother, Jane Mazza.

Animal abuse sentence

CA RIVERSIDE, Calif. — The co-defendant of a former animal rescuer, who pleaded guilty in January to child-endangerment and multiple animal-cruelty charges, has been sentenced to 180 days in custody and four years' probation.

Marla Jean Smith was ordered to start serving her sentence on weekends beginning April 1. Smith helped former partner John Weinhardt operate the defunct Tiger Rescue sanctuary. State officials testified during Weinhardt's trial that they found one of the couples' children living in a home filled with trash and animal feces.

Officials also found malnourished tiger and leopard cubs in an attic, two alligators in a bathtub, two juvenile tigers in a patio and powerful animal tranquilizers, including PCP, in an unlocked refrigerator.

Street taxi getaway

UT OGDEN — Police said it seemed more like a movie plot than real life when a taxi driver became the reluctant wheel in for a suspected bank robber's getaway attempt.

The hunt for Donald Archambault, 53, who was suspected of robbing a Salt Lake City bank, ended 30 miles north of Ogden. Archambault bailed out of the cab and was arrested by waiting police.

Cabbie Ali Ahmed didn't realize his customer was wanted until he got a call on his cell phone from a police detective.

Ahmed's fears escalated when the suspect allegedly told him "he would empty his gun" if Ahmed turned him in to police. The suspect didn't know that Ahmed was talking to a detective throughout much of the Interstate 15 ride.

Gangsters get life

DC WASHINGTON — Six members of a drug gang dubbed "Murder Inc." blamed for dozens of killings in the nation's capital were sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The group's leaders, Kevin L. Gray, 33, and Rodney L. Moore, 39, were convicted last year after an eight-month trial. Gray was sentenced Wednesday to 26 concurrent life terms, plus 285 years. Moore received 14 concurrent life sentences, plus 135 years.

Four men who were convicted last May also were sentenced to multiple life terms.

The Murder Inc. gang is believed responsible for at least 31 killings between 1989 and 1999 as part of a quest to dominate the District of Columbia's cocaine and heroin markets, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Stories and photos from wire services

Horoscope

In these final days of the sun's visit in Pisces, a solar cycle through the zodiac ends. The wrapping-up process causes us to account for the good, bad and ugly of the last 12 months. Flashes of extreme emotion swing the mood like a wild pendulum. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Our life is March weather, savage and serene in one hour."

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (March 15). You're destined for success. This year proves to you that your hard work and wishing have been for a purpose. Surprising turns in the next 10 weeks cause you to act quickly or miss out. Getting enough sleep, food and exercise allows you to stay mentally and physically trimmer. Love requires sacrifice in May. Lucky signs are Leo and Taurus.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). You're usually goal-oriented, so days like today, when you feel sort of lost and restless, are quite out of character. Here's a hint: Sometimes, the "goal" is unconscious. You're already working toward it without realizing what it is.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). Explorations of the higher mind bring you closer to happiness. The quest for knowledge is an ongoing one, though. With all your research and study, you may find there is no explanation that can satisfy you.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). Public relations do matter. Put energy there. You're so used to your work that it no longer seems impressive to you. Though it's hardly the sort of thing you boast about, someone else does and is promoted as a result.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). It would be nice to be left in your own little corner of the world to do your thing. But that's just not the way it works. Getting along with difficult people will be the difference between success and failure.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). There's a time to extend your arms and a time to retract them, hugging your

own soul. You're comforted by pulling back—delve deeper into your own reality, and you'll find the elation you've been seeking through external means.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Moral and ethical issues arise. If you can't get involved in what the group is doing, it may be because it's inherently wrong. An honest man doesn't really have a knack for that sort of activity.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You have a long list of unfinished business. The good news is that much of it doesn't have to be accomplished by you. Let loved ones

know that if they're going to be hanging out with you, they should expect to be put to work.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Someone mysterious inspires you to activate your search engine! Everyone has something to hide, though the secrets you uncover may not be as deep and dark as your imagination wants them to be.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You can still win, but you must be persuasive to do it. Getting people to think like you is impossible. So try and come to a consensus with the people you're pretty much stuck with.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). It's a bird, it's a plane, it's ... your imagination. Unfortunately, no one is coming to rescue you out of your current precarious position. So you must rely on your own super skills.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Loved ones who have been recently neglected will act out. Consider that there is probably a better way to balance your time. Rework your schedule. Remember, the excellent things in this world must be fought for.

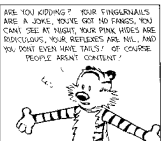
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). Once again, it's clear that your happiness depends on being able to connect in agreement with two or three special people. As John Lennon said, "A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality."

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



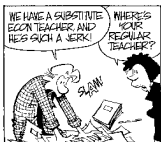
Calvin and Hobbes



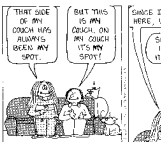
Jump Start



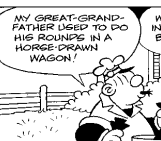
Zits



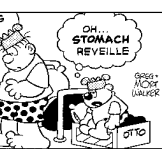
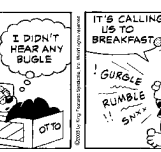
Cathy



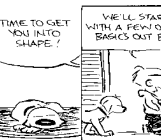
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



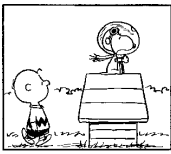
Red and Rover



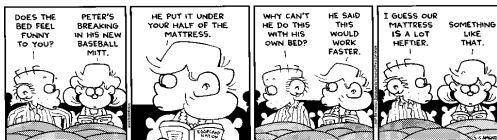
Better or Worse



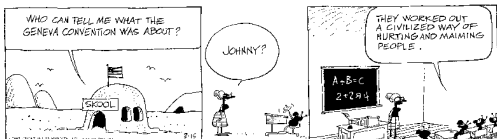
Peanuts



Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



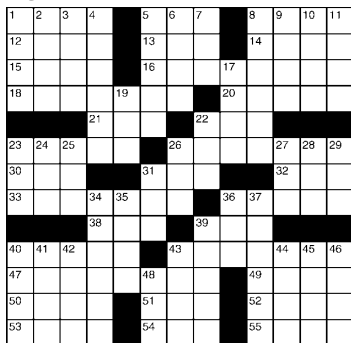
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Desire
- 5 Barbie's ex
- 8 Karate school
- 12 Wan
- 13 Paul Bunyan prop
- 14 Carbon compound
- 15 Turn on a pivot
- 16 Longfellow subject
- 18 League championship
- 20 O. Henry's specialty
- 21 Billboards
- 22 Colony dweller
- 23 Low voice
- 26 Snobbish
- 30 Literary collection
- 31 Comic DeLuise
- 32 Sapporo sash
- 33 Fireplug
- 36 Leonard Marx
- 38 Mound stat
- 39 Ovine comment
- 40 Savory jelly
- 43 Personnel Dept. actions
- 47 Intensify
- 49 Caffeine-rich nut
- 50 Square
- 51 Marry
- 52 Works with
- 53 Disarray
- 54 Chowderhead
- 55 Witnesses

Down

- 1 Nasty stinger
- 2 Capri, e.g.
- 3 Avoid
- 4 Laughing pack
- 5 Madeline and Gus
- 6 Egress
- 7 PBS benefactor
- 8 Scarcity
- 9 Aware of
- 10 Revelation writer
- 11 Moisturizer name
- 17 KFC piece
- 19 Commotion
- 22 Intention
- 23 "Humbly!"
- 24 Whatever amount
- 25 Despondent
- 26 Stolen
- 27 Polio precursor
- 28 Regis and Kelly's network
- 29 Uncle (Sp.)
- 31 "CSI" evidence
- 34 Holds the scepter
- 35 St. Louis attraction
- 36 Ford or Lincoln
- 37 17-syllable verses
- 39 Constricts
- 40 Attention getter
- 41 Golfer Ballesteros
- 42 Slapstick arsenal
- 43 Doctor's revenue
- 44 Winning margin, maybe
- 45 Merriment
- 46 Back talk
- 48 Airline initials

Answer to Previous Puzzle



3-15

CRYPTOQUIP

Z ZDHQZEM VGHV H LBYXX
NMVSMME H LHEEY HEK
H NMRR SYIRK NM KINNMK

"VGM NYDDMBHEQ."
Yesterday's Cryptquip: ONE OF MY COMPUTER KEYS APPEARS TO BE STICKING, BUT I CAN'T PUT MY FINGER ON IT.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: N equals B

REAL ESTATE

Computers 360 Furniture 510 Home Electronics 570 Jobs Offered 630 Sporting Goods 980

Zero to 100 in 60 seconds

800HighTech.com

CUSTOM COMPUTERS

Furniture 510

Foster, Okinawa • Three piece chrome wood entertainment center, holds up to 37inch television (\$1500.00) CD/black metal turntable, glass doors, 20inch wide, ready to go! Men and Female casual, professional, business, please call 646-5245 or e-mail: shirley@fosterok.com

Foster, Okinawa • Two piece black leather loveseat & chair, three fourth old asking \$1500 or best offer also dining room table with 4 leather chairs asking \$1200 or best offer must see to pictures call 646-5495

Foster, Okinawa • Two item bed with 4 drawers built in dresser, 20inch wide, 20inch deep, 20inch high, \$75.00 each call 646-6305

Foster, Okinawa • Wooden Trolley Bed in Lin. New condition. Comes with mattress and box spring. Also sports new bedding set. The entire set is priced at \$1500.00. Call Jason Jemmer 646-8877 or e-mail: jasonjemmer@earthlink.net

Kadena, Cedar, Souder • Computer Desk, 20inch wide, 20inch deep, 20inch high, \$75.00 each call 646-6305

Kadena, Okinawa • 4 piece table set includes coffee table, 2 end tables and a sofa table, all with matching ottomans. We paid over \$500 for this set. Please call Denise or James at 646-8877 or e-mail: jasonjemmer@earthlink.net

Kadena, Okinawa • 4 piece table set includes coffee table, 2 end tables and a sofa table, all with matching ottomans. We paid over \$500 for this set. Please call Denise or James at 646-8877 or e-mail: jasonjemmer@earthlink.net

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Furniture 510

Kadena, Okinawa • White top bed with mattress. New. \$75.00 each call 646-6305

Kadena, Okinawa • WOOD CARBONADO 3 piece sofa, 20inch wide, 20inch deep, 20inch high, \$75.00 each call 646-6305

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Michigan State women get No. 1 seed for first time

BY CHUCK SCHOFFNER

The Associated Press

Southeastern Conference powers LSU and Tennessee received No. 1 seeds in the NCAA women's basketball tournament on Sunday, joined by ACC tournament champ North Carolina and a team that reached that level for the first time in program history: Michigan State.

The Big Ten tournament champions edged Stanford — which just last week climbed atop The Associated Press poll for the first time this year — to take the No. 1 spot in a bracket that's sure to be tough.

That's because the Kansas City Regional includes the top-ranked Cardinal as the No. 2 seed; Connecticut, winner of the last three national championships, gets the

No. 3 spot; and Kansas State, runner-up in the Big 12 tournament, was No. 4.

"We're just kind of ready to play a game, to be honest," said Michigan State coach Joanne P. McCallie, wearing a wide grin with her jubilant team behind her. "We've had a week off and these girls are getting grumpy."

Stanford coach Tara Vanderveer looked defiant when she

learned her top-ranked Cardinal would be a No. 2 — the first No. 1 ranked team not to earn a top tournament seed in since Texas in 1984.

"I have no reaction to that," Vanderveer said. "We're really excited to be in the tournament. I love coaching this team."

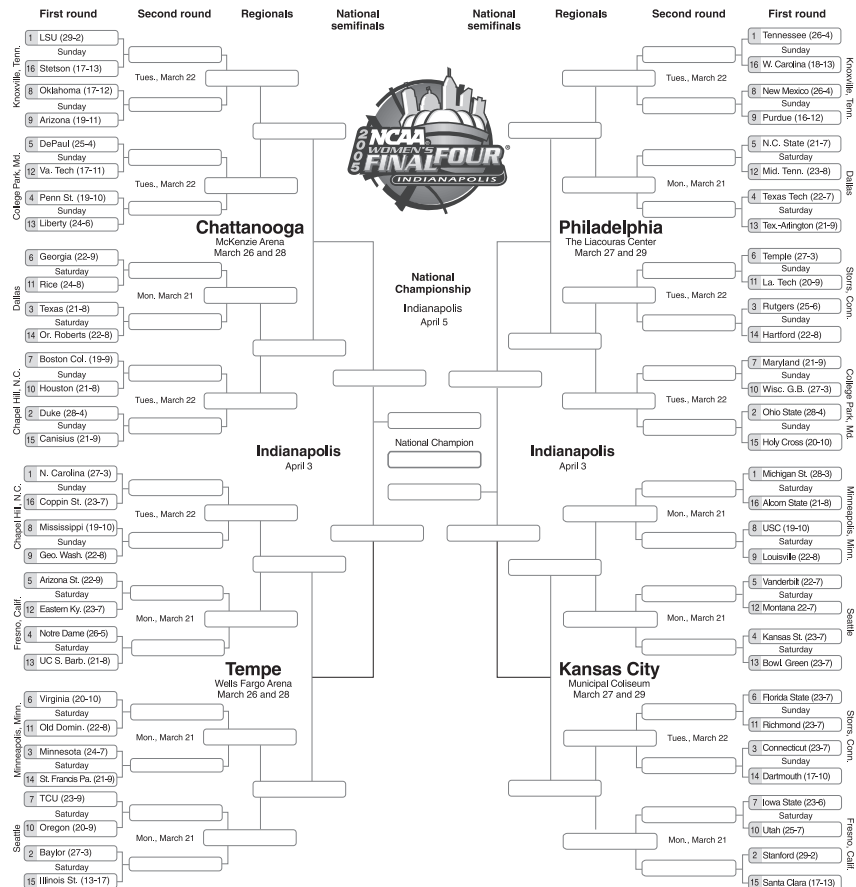
LSU (29-2) landed in the Chattanooga Regional, the closest site to its campus. Tennessee was No. 1

in Philadelphia and North Carolina topped the Tempe bracket.

The women's tournament scrapped the East, Midwest, West and West designations for regionals and replaced them with the name of the city hosting the regional semifinals and finals.

Other No. 2 seeds were ACC co-champion Duke (Chattanooga), Big 12 champion Baylor (Tempe) and Big Ten co-champion Ohio State (Philadelphia).

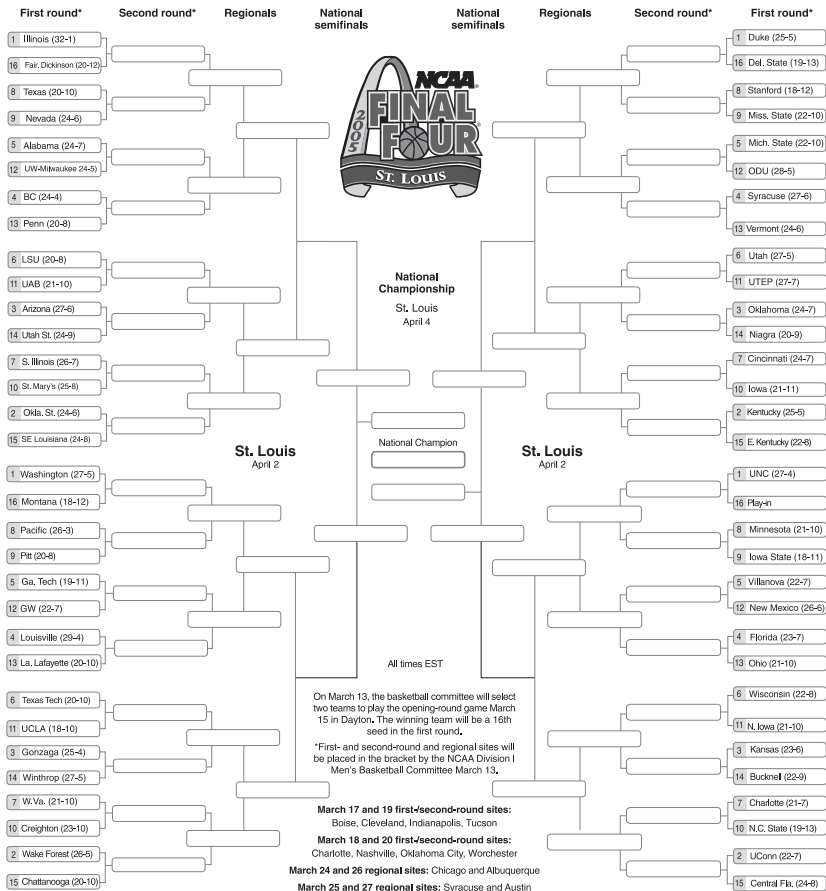
2005 NCAA Division I women's basketball championship



SOURCE: NCAA

AP

2005 NCAA Division I men's basketball championship



Announcement of NCAA field only the start of CBS exec's job

BY DAN CAESAR

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ESPN has its "Bracket Buster" weekend, a parade of late-season games between teams from mid-major leagues that allows them a chance to impress the NCAA tournament selection committee.

Once the brackets are released, Mike Aresco becomes the true bracket buster as he pulls apart the matchups in order to set the

starting times of the games in the first two rounds.

Aresco is senior vice president of programming for CBS, which is televising the tourney, and it's his job to cobble together the most palatable schedule for the network. His challenge is to avoid having games of interest in specific areas being played simultaneously.

"It's a heck of a puzzle, and it ends up being a lot of fun — although I don't think so much fun on those Sundays," Aresco said.

"My job is to set up Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday," so the starting times of games have as few regional conflicts as possible, he said.

"You don't want North Carolina and Duke in the same broadcast 'window.'"

(Windows are the time blocks when games begin — late morning for the first window, early afternoon for the second, early evening for the third and late evening for the fourth.) But even

with all of those blocks available, trouble still arises.

"Sometimes there are as many as five teams from the New York City market," he said. "One year we had six, seven or maybe even eight teams from California. Sometimes there is no way to get around a conflict (because) . . . when you start flipping games around, you just create other conflicts."

He said he has an assistant "who just looks for conflicts—that's her job."

To that end, they even have a book listing the location of all the teams in the tournament—just to make sure.

"Before eight years or so ago, who knew where Gonzaga was?" he said of the school from Spokane, Wash.

But conflicts sometimes are inevitable, and in the rare instances when teams of intense local interest are playing simultaneously, CBS sends one to an alternate station.

Kinnecats

Florida ends 40 years of frustration as Walsh leads romp over Kentucky

By PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Matt Walsh made sure Florida didn't squander another chance to win the Southeastern Conference tournament.

Walsh scored 26 points, including consecutive three-pointers that sparked a stunning 21-2 run, leading the Gators to a 70-53 rout of No. 4 Kentucky on Sunday and their first SEC tournament championship.

Florida (23-7) beat the Wildcats for the second time in eight days, victories that knocked Kentucky out of contention for a No. 1 seed in the NCAA tournament.

The Gators also defied history, winning their first tournament title on their 40th try against the team that has defined success in this event. Kentucky (25-5) had won the last two tournaments, 10 of the past 13 and 25 in all — more than the rest of the schools in the SEC combined.

Even though the Georgia Dome resembled Rupp Arena South — Florida took up only one section in the crowd at 4-408 — the Wildcats couldn't fend off a team playing its best basketball of the season at the perfect time. The Gators gave no even slightest effort, and certainly improved their position for the NCAA tournament.

Florida led throughout the first

half and well into the second before Kentucky appeared to seize control with a 15-1 outburst.

Randolph Morris scored on an offensive rebound with 12:32 remaining, letting out a yell after giving Kentucky its first lead of the game at 42-40.

After Florida turned it over, Patrick Sparks drove into the lane and flipped in another basket that pushed the Wildcats to a four-point lead.

It was all Gators thereafter. Walsh, the tournament MVP, hit a three-pointer to stem Kentucky's momentum. After Morris put up an airball, Walsh hit another three from the corner to put Florida back in front at 46-44.

Anthony Robertson, part of Florida's "Big Three" with Walsh and David Lee, drove right by Kentucky freshman Rajon Rondo for a layup. The Wildcats turned it over, and Walsh hit another three-pointer to make it 51-44.

Ravi Moss broke the run of 11 straight points with a basket but that was merely a brief respite in Florida's dominance.

Robertson swished a three, Walsh hit a leaper in the lane, Corey Brewer scored on a fast-break layup, Walsh made one free throw, and Brewer scored on another drive to make it 61-46.

At that point, the Florida bench was hopping up and down, know-



Matt Walsh (44), being guarded by Kentucky's Ravi Moss, was voted MVP of the SEC tournament after Florida's 70-53 victory on Sunday.

ing the Gators had finally broken Kentucky's stranglehold on the tournament. The Wildcats faithful headed quietly for the exits.

With 20 seconds to go, Florida coach Billy Donovan called a timeout to give his starters — especially the Big Three — a chance to get one more standing ovation as they came off the court. When the horn sounded, Brewer hurled the ball roofward and leaped in

the air at midcourt, pumping his right fist.

Kentucky shot only 37.5 percent from the field, including a dismal 2-19 outside the three-point arc — depriving the Wildcats of one of their favorite weapons. Florida also dominated the boards, seizing control in the first half and finishing with a 48-31 edge. Lee had a staggering 17 rebounds.

Duke shows that site makes no difference

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — New location, familiar ending.

The Atlantic Coast Conference brought its annual tournament to the nation's capital for the first time, and this version had all the excitement of the 51 that preceded it. And when all 40 minutes of basketball were completed, there was Duke, cutting down the nets to celebrate another championship.

Tournament MVP J.J. Redick scored 26 points, Shelden Williams had 16 points and 13 rebounds and the fifth-ranked Blue Devils held off a late charge to squeeze past Georgia Tech 69-64 on Sunday.

"I'm so proud of my team. Not just for this game but for the whole season," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "They've found ways to win."

Third-seeded Duke won despite making only one field goal over the final 11 minutes — that a point by Williams just before the final buzzer.

"The key was we played really good defense," Krzyzewski said, referring to Georgia Tech's 30 percent shooting from the field.

The Blue Devils (25-5) have won 15 ACC tournaments, tying archival North Carolina for most in league history. While the Tar Heels haven't added to their ledger since 1998, the Blue Devils have won six of seven.

Tourney roundup

Duke went 15-for-20 at the free throw line over the final 9 minutes to fend off the pesky Yellow Jackets (19-11), who got as close as 64-62 with 1:27 to go.

Big Ten

No. 1 Illinois 54, No. 23 Wisconsin 43. Deron Williams, who had dribbled out of play holding his finger high in the air to signify what the polls have said is most of the season — Illinois is indeed No. 1. The top-ranked Illini dominated defensively to build a big lead and then held on Sunday to beat No. 23 Wisconsin 54-43 in the Big Ten tournament final for their school-record 32nd victory.

Illinois (32-1) passed its final test before the NCAA tournament, withstanding a late 10-0 run by the Badgers (22-8).

The Illini got 15 points and 12 rebounds from Roger Powell and 12 points each from Luther Head and James Augustine, who was voted tournament MVP.

Big 12

No. 10 Oklahoma State 72, Texas Tech 68. John Lucas scored 19 points, including a crucial free throw with 44 seconds left, and No. 10 Oklahoma State

earned its second straight Big 12 tournament championship.

Joey Graham, the tournament's MVP, added 16 points and 11 rebounds for the third-seeded Cowboys (24-6), who overcame 20 turnovers.

Ronald Ross, who had 22 points and 10 rebounds for Texas Tech, airballed a three-point attempt with time winding down and the fourth-seeded Red Raiders (20-10) trailing 71-68. Lucas caught the ball under the basket, was fouled, and hit the second of his two free throw attempts to put the game out of reach.

Southland Conference

SE Louisiana 49, Northwestern St. 42. Ricky Woods scored 26 points to lead Southwestern Louisiana (24-8) to its first NCAA tournament berth.

Southeastern Louisiana (24-8), the tournament's No. 2 seed, ended a 10-game winning streak for top-seeded Northwestern State (21-12).

Southwestern Athletic

Alabama A&M 72, Alabama St. 53. Obie Trotter hit eight three-pointers and scored 24 points to lead Alabama A&M (18-13) to its first NCAA tournament bid.

In Saturday games:

Big East

No. 16 Syracuse 68, West Virginia 59. Hakim Warrick had 20 points and 13 rebounds — his third double-double in three games — and Syracuse won the Big East tournament for the first time since 1992.

The third-seeded Orange (27-6) won their fourth Big East tournament title in their 12th championship game appearance.

The loss at Madison Square Garden ended a history-making run for West Virginia (21-10), the first No. 8 seed to reach the championship game. No team had ever won four games to take the title and the Mountaineers fell one game short in winning their first conference championship since winning the Atlantic 10 in 1984.

Gerry McNamara added 16 points for the Orange.

Tyrone Sully had 13 points for the Mountaineers.

Pacific-10

No. 14 Washington 81, No. 8 Arizona 72. Nate Robinson scored six points in the final 1:07, helping Washington upset Arizona for its first Pac-10 title.

Washington (27-5) outscored the Wildcats 19-4 over the final 5:12 after trailing by six points.

Robinson and Tre Simmons led the Huskies with 18 points each, and Jamaal Williams added 16.

Salim Stoudamire led Arizona (27-6) with 37 points.

Men's tournament scoreboard

Atlantic Coast Conference

Georgia Tech 78, North Carolina 75
Duke 69, North Carolina State 69
Championship

Duke 69, Georgia Tech 64
Atlantic 10 Conference

Saint Joseph's 73, Xavier 68
George Washington 77, Temple 58
Championship

George Washington 75, Saint Joseph's 67
Big East Conference

West Virginia 76, Villanova 76
Syracuse 67, Connecticut 63
Championship

Syracuse 66, West Virginia 65
Big Ten Conference

Illinois 64, Minnesota 56
Wisconsin 59, Michigan 55
Championship

Illinois 54, Michigan 54
Big 12 Conference

Texas Tech 69, Oklahoma 63
Oklahoma State 73, Kansas 75
Championship

Oklahoma State 73, Kansas 75
Big West Conference

Pacific 63, Cal State Northridge 61
Utah State 84, Cal State Fullerton 77
Championship

Utah State 85, Pacific 59
Mid-American Conference

Ohio 63, Miami (Ohio) 56
Buffalo 75, Western Michigan 68
Championship

Ohio 66, Buffalo 75, OT
Mountain West Conference

Utah 73, UNLV 67
New Mexico 77, San Diego State 67
Championship

New Mexico 66, Utah 56
Pacific-10 Conference

Arizona 90, Oregon State 87
Washington 66, Stanford 63
Championship

Washington 81, Arizona 73
Southeastern Conference

Florida 68, Alabama 61
Kentucky 79, LSU 71, OT
Championship

SE Louisiana 49, Northwestern St. 42
Southwestern Athletic Conference

Alabama A&M 72, Alabama St. 53
Boise State 85, Fresno State 85
Championship

Texas A&P 80, Boise State 85
Boise State 85, Fresno State 85
Championship

Texas A&P 80, Boise State 78
Mountain West

New Mexico 60, No. 15 Utah 56. Danny Granger made four straight clutch free throws and finished with 28 points and 11 rebounds to lead second-seeded New Mexico (26-6) past top-seeded Utah in the Mountain West championship game.

Andrew Bogut had 19 points and 16 rebounds for Utah (27-5).

Big West

Utah St. 65, No. 18 Pacific 52. Jaycee Carroll scored 22 points and Utah State ended Pacific's 22-game winning streak to win the Big West title and advance to the NCAA tournament.

Carroll, the Big West freshman of the year, went 9-for-19 from the field, and Spencer Nelson added 16 points for the second-seeded Aggies (24-7).

Western Athletic

UTEP 91, Boise St. 78: Filiberto Rivera scored 17 of his 32 points in the last six minutes to help Texas El Paso (27-7) hold off Boise State.

Mid-American

Ohio 80, Buffalo 79 (OT): Freshman Leon Williams made a layup in the final second as Ohio, down by points in the second half, rallied to win the Mid-American Conference title and its first NCAA berth since 1994.

McWire linked to '90s steroid probe

Report: Player was not target of federal investigation

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mark McGwire's name was mentioned several times during a federal steroids investigation in the early 1990s, but he was not the target of the probe nor was any evidence collected against him, the Daily News reported Sunday.

McWire, Jose Canseco and five current players along with four baseball executives were subpoenaed to testify at a congressional hearing on steroids Thursday. The commissioner's office has said it will fight the subpoenas. Canseco says he will testify

and has asked for immunity so he can answer all questions; McGwire and some of the other players haven't said whether they'll show in Washington.

Two dealers caught in the federal investigation told the Daily News that a California man named Curtis Wenzlaff gave Canseco and McGwire illegal anabolic steroids.

A spokesman for McGwire, Marc Altieri, told the newspaper the former player does not remember meeting Wenzlaff.

"We're not going to comment on anything at this time," Altieri

said, "but we believe one should consider the sources of such allegations."

Canseco said Sunday on ABC's "This Week" he met Wenzlaff in the 1980s and worked out with him but did not buy steroids from him.

When asked by the newspaper, Wenzlaff declined to comment about McGwire but said he did give Canseco steroids.

"I supplied a bunch of players, but I'm not going to name any other names," Wenzlaff told the Daily News. "Jose's different because he opened the door with his book."

Canseco said in his recently published autobiography that he, McGwire and Giambi shot steroids together in a bathroom stall at Oakland Coliseum.

McWire and Giambi have denied Canseco's charges.

Canseco said Sunday he thinks a congressional investigation of steroid use in baseball is a good idea and more people should be called to testify.

"If Major League Baseball wanted in the past to completely just sever steroids from Major League Baseball, they would have done it. Obviously, there was so much money to be made," Canseco told "This Week."



Evidence wasn't collected against Mark McGwire during a federal probe, but his name reportedly was mentioned repeatedly.

Wells makes first start for Red Sox

The Associated Press

David Wells made his Boston debut and began looking ahead to Opening Day.

Andy Pettitte is still waiting to make his first start the spring.

Wells worked two solid innings during the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' 6-4 victory over the Red Sox on Saturday, then said he'd be happy to start opening night April 3 against his former team, the New York Yankees, if Curt Schilling isn't yet recovered from offseason ankle surgery.

"I don't mind taking the ball in any game no matter what, especially a big game, and the first game of the season is going to be a big game," said Wells, who now wears No. 3, the same number one of his favorite players, Babe Ruth, wore with the Yankees.

Pettitte was scratched from his scheduled start for Houston because of a sprained right ankle after falling down stairs at his apartment Friday.

"He's feeling pretty good today and it is not as swollen as we

Spring training

thought it would be," Houston manager Phil Garner said.

Pettitte tested the ankle in a brief session at the Astros' camp Saturday morning. The 32-year-old left-hander is trying to rebound from an injury-plagued 2004 season that included three trips to the disabled list because of elbow problems.

"The probably could have gone a little longer, but we didn't want to push it," Garner said. "We'll give him another bullpen session on Tuesday and maybe pitch him in a game later in the week."

After going through rehab for the past eight months, Pettitte pitched three innings in a simulated game Tuesday.

Tim Lincecum replaced Pettitte and struck out six in four scoreless innings to help Houston defeat the Cleveland Indians 7-3 in Winter Haven, Fla.

At Fort Myers, Fla., the 41-year-old Wells allowed four



Boston Red Sox pitcher David Wells delivers to Tampa Bay Devil Rays' Delmon Young during the first inning in Fort Myers, Fla., on Saturday.

hits, one earned run and a wild pitch. He had no walks or strikeouts while throwing 28 pitches, 20 for strikes.

"My only job here is to go in here and win with the Boston Red Sox and try to give them quality

innings and try to bring another championship to Boston," Wells said.

B.J. Upton hit a solo homer for Tampa Bay. David Ortiz hit a three-run homer and Troy Nixon added a solo shot for Boston.

Report: Jeremy Giambi admits to steroid use

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Former major league Jeremy Giambi, who played one injury-plagued season for the Boston Red Sox, admitted he used steroids, the Kansas City Star reported Sunday.

"It's something I did," Giambi told the newspaper. "I apologize. I made a mistake. I moved on. I kind of want it in the past."

Giambi, the younger brother of Yankees star Jason Giambi, signed a minor league contract with the Chicago White Sox on Tuesday.

Jeremy Giambi broke into the big leagues in 1998 with Kansas City, then played with his brother in Oakland from 2000-01.

Jason Giambi won the AL MVP Award in 2000, and his younger brother had his best season the next year, hitting .283 with 12 homers and 57 RBIs in 371 at-bats.

The younger Giambi has also played for Philadelphia.

His last stint in the majors was in 2003, when he batted .197 in 127 at-bats with the Red Sox. He missed most of last season with a herniated disc. Signed by the Dodgers, he didn't play in a big league game.

While he did not specifically say his brother used steroids, Jeremy Giambi noted a news conference his brother had last month in New York during which he apologized profusely, but did not say why he was apologizing.

"If you don't know what he's apologizing for," Jeremy Giambi said, "you must've been in a coma for two years."

Jeremy Giambi declined to be specific about his steroid use. He told the newspaper he wants to come clean about steroids and hopes others will do the same.

Congressman: No-show players would be held in contempt

BY HOWARD FENDRICH

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The head of the committee holding a hearing this week on steroids in baseball pushed Sunday the full House easily would pass a contempt of Congress resolution if subpoenaed players such as Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa don't show.

Government Reform Committee Chairman Thomas E. Luken told NBC's "Meet the Press" that one or more of the seven active and former players called to testify might be excused from appearing, though he did not specify which players might be excused.

But Davis said his panel would vote to find players who fail to appear Thursday in contempt, and

said he thinks the House would approve such a resolution by a large margin. The last contempt of Congress prosecution was in 1983.

"These people are not above the law," Davis told NBC. "You know, they may fly on private planes and make millions of dollars and be on baseball cards, but a subpoena is exactly what it says it is. They have to appear."

Davis was asked why Barry Bonds wasn't invited to the hearing.

"There are a lot of reasons why people are on or off the list, including the BALCO investigation in San Francisco, but including the fact that we didn't want to make this about one player," Davis said on "Meet the Press."

Bonds reportedly testified to a grand jury in 2003 that he used a clear substance and a cream given to him by a trainer charged in the BALCO steroid-distribution case, but the San Francisco Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro, Curt Schilling, Frank Thomas and Jason Giambi — whose younger brother, Jeremy, told a newspaper Saturday that he used steroids.

Subpoenaed for Thursday's session: former stars McGwire and Jose Canseco and current players Sosa, Rafael Palmeiro, Curt Schilling, Frank Thomas and Jason Giambi — whose younger brother, Jeremy, told a newspaper Saturday that he used steroids.

Canseco — whose best-selling book about steroids helped draw Congress' attention — asked for immunity so he can testify fully, and his lawyer said the request is

being considered by the Justice Dept. called, Davis said. "They've been accused by former colleagues of having used drugs at this point. In one case, we've had players who have said they were to be able to come up and set the record straight. But there have been public accusations about these players. They've set records. There is, I think, a widespread feeling that maybe they cheated their way to achieving these records by using illegal drugs."

Edwards' flat allows Martin to add win 47

BY TOM GARDNER
The Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Mark Martin moved into the lead when seemingly unstoppable Carl Edwards was sidelined by a flat tire, extending his record for Busch Series victories to 47 Saturday at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

Martin picked up his second Busch win this season, following his victory at California two weeks ago.

Edwards, making just his sixth Busch start, shot away from the field after taking his first series pole and dominated for 125 of the 200 laps in the Sam's Town 300 until the right rear tire went down on lap 186, sending him spinning into the infield.

"I had a little luck today. Carl Edwards was in a position to win that one," Martin said of his Roush Racing teammate. "I was just lucky to get into the front."

"He was just checked out. There wasn't much we could do

about it. That one just slipped through his fingers."

Martin seized on Edwards' misfortune when his teammate's right rear tire failed.

"I knew Carl had a problem down the back stretch and I knew at that point the race could be on between (Stremme and me)."

As Martin swept to a 1.412-second victory about 14 car lengths — Kevin Harvick and David Stremme battled for second. Harvick passed on the last turn of the final lap and edged Stremme by the length of his hood.

Joe Nemechek finished fourth and Greg Biffle fifth. Reed Sorenson was sixth, and Edwards worked his way up to seventh, despite the tire problems.

Stremme was handicapped in the late going by a cranky gearshift lever he had to hold while he was trying to steer the car around the 1.5-mile Las Vegas oval.

"It's pretty hard driving one-handed around this slippery track," he said.

Els comes out on top again in Middle East

The Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar — Ernie Els won his second straight tournament in the Middle East, rallying to take the Qatar Masters on Sunday by one shot after carding a 7-under 64 on the final round.

The third-ranked South African, who finished with a 12-under 276, fired seven birdies to come back from a five-stroke deficit and edge Henrik Stenson and Sweden at the Doha Golf Course. Stenson shot a 71 on Sunday.

Richard Green of Australia and Pierre Fulke of Sweden tied for third at 9 under.

Els also won the Dubai Desert Classic last week.

OGILVY makes up eight strokes, moves into tie for lead

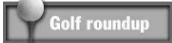
PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Australia's Geoff Ogilvy overcame an eight-shot deficit at the start of play Saturday, shooting an 8-under-par 64 to tie the Brett Wetterich for the lead after three rounds in the Honda Classic.

Wetterich, bidding for his first PGA Tour victory, began the day alone in the lead but scrambled to a 72 and joined Ogilvy at 12-under 204.

Two-time U.S. Open champion Lee Janzen, seeking his first tour title since 1998, bogeyed No. 18 to fall out of a three-way tie for the lead. A round of 72 left him one stroke off the pace and tied with Pat Perez (67) in 11 under.

With the greens firmer than in the first two rounds and winds still strong, bogeys became more frequent on the long Country Club at Mirasol course.

Ogilvy, who won his first title in 1988, PGA Tour starts two weeks ago at Tucson, struggled to a 73 in the opening round but began to surge Saturday when he birdied



four of the first six holes. He also birdied Nos. 17 and 18.

"I just kept hitting nice shots and getting good putts," he said. "Maybe six months ago, sneaking right up the leader board deep on Saturday, I might have gotten a bit more nervous than I did. I was nothing but comfortable."

No. 2-ranked Vijay Singh, the lone player entered among the world's top six, shot 70 and was under. Todd Hamilton, the champion last year, shot 72 and was 4 under.

Wetterich and Janzen, playing in the first two, swapped the lead three times early. They struggled on the back nine, where most of the holes went into the wind, and slipped back to Ogilvy on the leader board.

Fergus leads SBC Classic after 7-under 65

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. — Keith Fergus shot a 7-under 65 to take the one-stroke lead over Mark McNulty after two rounds of the Champions Tour's SBC Classic.

The 51-year-old Fergus, a former golf coach at Houston and three-time winner in 14 years on the PGA Tour, had six birdies and a bogey on the Valencia Country Club course for a 7-under 137 total.

McNulty shot a 66 to move to 138, two strokes ahead of Gary McCord (66) and D.A. Weirberg (69). Mike Reid was in fifth place at 141 after a second-round 71, and 62-year-old Iain Auld, the first-round leader, followed an opening 69 with a 73, dropping to 142.



Bode Miller, left, and Anja Paerson show their World Cup overall trophies after the final event on Sunday.

Paerson hangs on to overall title Swede edges Kostelic by three points

BY ERICA BULMAN
The Associated Press

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland — Sweden's Anja Paerson held off Croatia's Janica Kostelic to win the overall World Cup title Sunday in a competition that came down to the final skier in the final race of the season.

"Janica and I were both standing there in the finish, and we weren't sure who was going to win," Paerson said. "That's the way it ski racing should be."

Finland's Tanja Poutiainen, who already had clinched the slalom championship, captured the giant slalom title.

Spain's Marie Jose Rienda Contreras, the last skier of the day, won the final giant slalom in 2 minutes, 20.18 seconds. Poutiainen was second in 2:20.48, and Nicole Hosp of Austria was third in 2:20.69.

Paerson won the championship by three points after entering the race with a 35-point lead over Kostelic in the overall standings.

She would have automatically won the title by finishing ahead of

the Croat. But Kostelic was eighth and Paerson 17th.

Kostelic and Paerson hugged after the race, and then Kostelic kissed her Swedish rival on the cheek before pushing her into the center of the finish area.

"Maybe we're not best friends, but we appreciate each other as skiers," Paerson said. "I admire her. We're both great skiers."

The Swede seemed on track to retain her overall title in the opening leg, finishing ahead of Kostelic, but things got tricky for Paerson in the second run.

Kostelic managed another strong performance in the second leg, crossing fourth, Paerson, running next, was uncharacteristically slow in her favorite discipline, finishing just within the points in 13th place with four racers to go.

Kostelic could have secured the title by finishing seventh or higher as long as Paerson fell out of the top 15. At the World Cup finals, only the top 15 finishers score points.

With one skier left, Kostelic was seventh and Paerson was al-

ready out of the top 15. But Rienda Contreras delivered a sizzling final run — overcoming a mistake where she went wide — to win the race and give Paerson the overall title by bumping Kostelic to eighth.

Paerson finished the season with 1,359 overall points, followed by Kostelic with 1,356.

In the men's final event on Sunday, Austria's Mario Matt won the slalom — his first victory in more than four years and newly crowned overall champion Bode Miller completed a slalom for just the second time this season.

Matt, the 2001 world champion, maintained his lead from the first run to complete the sun-drenched course in a combined time of 1 minute, 22.81 seconds. He was fastest in the opening run and third in the second.

Alois Vogl of Germany was second in 1:23.54 and Rainer Schoenfelder of Austria was third in 1:23.55.

Miller finished in sixth place. He was 13th after a mistake in the opening leg but delivered a blistering second run.

O's: Nats welcome to share TV deal

The Associated Press

BALTIMORE — The Baltimore Orioles are working on a deal that would provide television coverage for the Washington Nationals, a point they emphatically stressed Sunday in a full-page advertisement in the Washington Post.

The Orioles apparently took out the ad in response to an editorial in The Post that implied the team was seeking to block the relocated Montreal Expos from having games televised in the Baltimore-Washington market.

Orioles owner Peter Angelos fought the Expos' move to Washington, insisting it would have a "profound adverse impact" on the Baltimore team, a point stressed in the ad on page 5 of The Post sports section.

Angelos has been negotiating for months with baseball on a compensation package that would address TV coverage of the teams.

No settlement has been reached, but the ad indi-

cated that the Orioles are working behind the scenes with the Nationals to make the team part of the Orioles' Television Network.

"Most recently, a Post editorial incorrectly claimed the Orioles intend to prevent baseball fans from seeing the Nationals on television," the ad read. "Nothing could be further from the truth."

Further down the page, the ad reads, "The Orioles are prepared to offer a fair and appropriate fee to the Nationals in the many millions of dollars annually for the telecast of their games. Even now we are making plans to present the Nationals' games in the Washington area and ultimately present all Orioles' and Nationals' games throughout the entire territory."

The lack of an agreement between baseball and the Orioles has kept the Nationals from broadcasting their own games during spring training. With opening day just three weeks away, Nationals president Tony Tavaras is ready to move quickly to hire broadcast talent and complete other logistics once an agreement is reached.

SPORTS

Marching orders

Illinois gets No. 1 overall; Duke, Washington, North Carolina also top seeds for NCAA tournament

BY MICHAEL MAROT

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Top-ranked Illinois heads into the NCAA tournament with one loss and the overall No. 1 seed.

Joining the Big Ten champion Illini as No. 1s on Sunday were North Carolina and Duke from the Atlantic Coast Conference and this year's surprise, Washington, the Pac-10.

Illinois (32-1) was assigned to the Chicago regional. North Carolina (27-4) will be at Syracuse, N.Y., Duke (25-5) will be in Austin, Texas, and Washington (27-5) in Albuquerque, N.M.

It's the sixth time in eight years that two teams from a conference were seeded No. 1. The last time was 2003, when Oklahoma and Texas of the Big 12 were No. 1 seeds.

The Illini won't get any frequent flyer miles in this tournament as they will play the first and second rounds in Indianapolis with the regional in Chicago and the Final Four is April 2 and 4 in St. Louis.

Illinois, which opens play Thursday against Northeast Conference champion Fairleigh Dickinson, was followed in the Chicago regional by second-seeded Oklahoma State, which won the Big 12 tournament; No. 3 Arizona, the regular season Pac-10 champion, and fourth-seeded Boston College, co-champion of the Big East.



See tomorrow's edition of Stars and Stripes for a region-by-region breakdown of the NCAA tournament

Washington, the surprise of the No. 1s considering the Huskies were ranked 14th in the latest AP poll, opens play Thursday in Boise, Idaho, against Montana, the Big Sky champion.

The No. 2 seed in the Albuquerque regional was Wake Forest, which was considered a sure No. 1 seed candidate before the Demon Deacons lost in the ACC tournament quarterfinals to North Carolina State. Gonzaga, the West Coast Conference regular season and tournament champion, was seeded third and Louisville, which swept the Conference USA titles, was No. 4.



Edwards' flat tire helps Martin to 47th series victory, Page 31



Illinois' Luther Head drives past Wisconsin's Alando Tucker during the first half of the Big Ten tournament championship game on Sunday at the United Center in Chicago. Top-ranked Illinois beat the Badgers 54-43.

First time No. 1 Michigan 21 joins Tennessee, LSU, N. Carolina as top seeds in NCAA women's tourney

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Report: McGwire's name came up repeatedly during federal steroids probe in 1990s

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Okinawa's Cackovic, Seoul American's Novinger excel in Junior Olympic swim meet

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Terry leads late spurt as Mavs beat T-wolves Page 29

